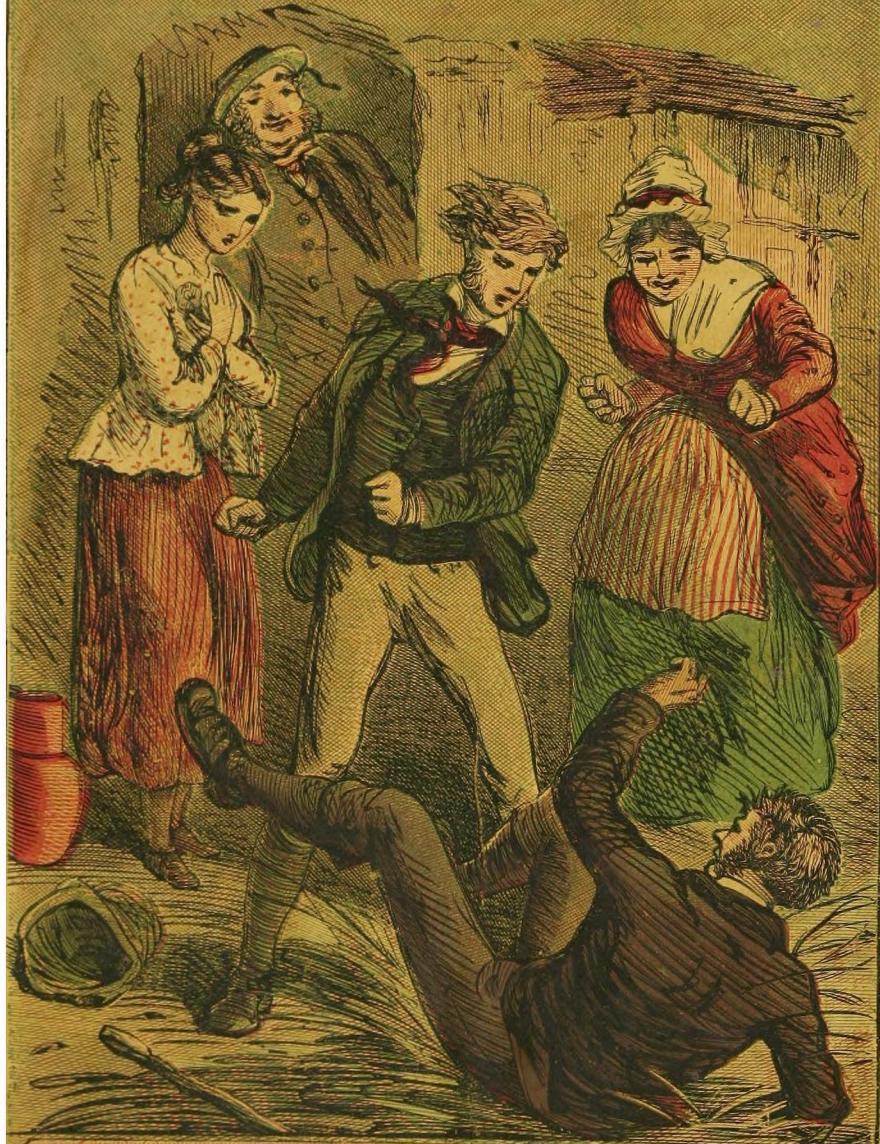


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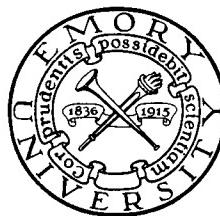
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IRISH COAST TALES OF LOVE
AND ADVENTURE.

BY
CAPT. L. ESMONDE WHITE.

NEW EDITION.

LONDON :
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THE
LOVERS OF BALLYVOOKAN.

CHAPTER I.

NEVERTHELESS the prettiest girl in all the village of Ballyvooken was Norah Flynn, and as she tripped lightly to mass on a Sunday in her green gown and shawl, with a roguish little straw hat just perched on her shining hair, and arch, twinkling eyes only looking up an excuse for fun and frolic, I assure you the number of hearts she broke was but equalled by heads subsequently cracked when the candidates of her favour met at neighbouring fairs, overflowing with love and whisky : however, this was long before Mr. Gladstone dipped his financial finger into the national beverage, putting it “beyant a desint boy’s dhrinkin’.”

Of all her lovers, none sought to maintain pre-eminence so much as Murtah Sullivan, or Sull Dhu, as he was called from his dark complexion, and at an evening dance it wasn’t everyone would gainsay his engaging her when-

ever and as often as he pleased, Sull not being exactly the sort of man prudent persons choose for an enemy. Not that he was more pugnacious than his neighbours, quite the contrary ; but there was a notion abroad “that he was an unlucky man to be crassed.” Johnny Morgan, one of his fishing companions, had done so, “an’ more betoken, he fell into the say, won night, herring-catching, and was niver seen alive agin.” No one could bring the slightest charge, however, against Sull, who was so much flurried at Johnny’s danger as to let the net-rope slip from his hands, when the boat unfortunately swung over the man, and entangled as he was in the meshes, his fate became certain.

Then, when Martin Parle entered the lists for Norah’s love, his smack, which he had left over-night hauled up on the beach, supported each side by strong beams, was found next morning with her back broken, the props having slipped in a most extraordinary manner ; and such an amount of injury was done, as kept Martin a poor man for many a day, and put dancing quite out of his head ; his friends making things worse with “There, now, you wouldn’t be sed an’ not crass Sull.”

But Martin was not altogether daunted either ; and when the boat was repaired he again put in his claim for a dance and a smile from Norah, which she willingly accorded, with an arch look towards Sull as he sulked in a corner. She had bestowed on him the name of her tame tiger ; for, however tigerish he might be to others, to her he certainly was tame ; and I believe, from the time of Una to the present day, nothing is so flattering to woman as taming her wild beast. However, notwith-

standing this sort of pride, most people seemed to consider that Martin was the one her heart preferred, and although she would tell him "to lave her in pace, an' mind not crass the tiger," she thought all the better of him for not taking the advice.

"I aint a taste afeered iv him, nor any other wild baste, nor a hundhrid iv 'em neither, wid an angel like yirself be me," soothered Martin, one night.

"Maybe you wouldn't like the tiger to hear that same," laughed Norah, hastily adding, whilst she became pale as death, "That I mightn't if he didn't though; an' ivy word iv it, too, I'm thinkin', fur I seen his face furnint the little hole in the windi, there."

"An' who cares iv he did?" said Martin. "Thim that listens nivir hears good, you knows." But, for all that, Martin looked a little closer at Sull when they next met, possibly to form an opinion from his countenance; if so, it afforded no clue, nor was there any change in his manner observable. So both men continued, each after his own fashion, to compete for the prize; and all others withdrawing, as if to leave a fair field, Norah Flynn appeared evidently destined to become the wife of Murtah Sullivan or Martin Parle.

Ballyvoakan was a fishing hamlet of some little extent, situated on the south coast of Ireland, and inhabited by a hardy race of men, who lived chiefly from their nets, whilst the families cultivated a few acres of patches dotted here and there amongst the rocks. In the days of which we write, before steam had torn up the coast waters, driving the fish, it is said, into the deep sea, this locality afforded not only ample occupation for the

natives, but had induced others to take up their residence and make a home there ; amongst whom were the two rivals for the hand of Norah.

Murtah Sullivan was understood to have come from Kerry, where his father followed the fishing business not far from Ballynaskelleys Bay. Having found his way to Ballyvoakan in pursuit of the herring on its annual migration, he liked the place so much as to remain there.

Martin Parle was a Wexford man from the neighbourhood of Carne and Kilmore. His family also fishermen, he had from childhood been accustomed to every spot of coast and coasting water, from Hook Tower to Wexford Bay. Naturally a smart lad, he added many remarks of his own to the general knowledge possessed in the locality, and before he was sixteen years old, it was admitted there were passes over the rocky ground about through which a boat, under Martin's guidance, twisted and turned her way to safety, when in other hands she would be dashed to pieces. Often and often, on the sudden springing up of a gale, all hands running for home, one of them might be seen beating up amongst the rocks, apparently rushing into certain destruction, and amidst the exclamations of the astonished and anxious groups on shore—"Musha, what the Puck is he at now ? Shure, it's bruss he'll be made agin the Bridge." Amidst all this, the craft was understood to be under the pilotage of Martin, and no matter how strange her evolutions, she always arrived first and safest ; when, as the crew passed homewards, many a kind hand would pat the youngster's dripping shoulders with, "It's yirsilf's the devil's boy iv a Martin!"

But Martin Parle's mother died, and his father married again, and somehow the old house became distasteful to him. When a little brother was born he fancied he could be spared, and announced "He'd go to say," the old man replying, "Not to be a fool ; what ailed him at all at all?" But there was something at Martin's heart, when he saw another woman in his mother's chair, that wouldn't let him rest, and though he didn't tell his father what ailed him at all at all, he did tell him he was resolved to engage in one of the round-land boats, when they next came, and the father told him to do as he liked : "He'd say no more to an omadawn."

So when the Torbay luggers came he did get on board one, and, taking leave of his people, sailed in her ; however, towards the end of the season, finding himself at Ballyvoakan, with money in his pocket, and a high character for skill, he resolved to stop there, and paying his way to a boat and net, became, as we have found him some years afterwards, an inhabitant of the place, and suitor of Norah Flynn.





CHAPTER II.

MARTIN PARLE seemed to have a sort of natural sagacity for sea-pilotage in general ; and, no doubt, with proper advantages might have figured amongst those worthies whose biographies, perused by the rising generation with eyes and mouth equally distended, contribute so much to excite the adventurous spirit of our countrymen. As it was, he only arrived at being the cleverest and boldest holder of a tiller amongst the fishermen of Ballyvoakan, and in that capacity had more than once earned money by throwing himself on board a land-locked, puzzled home-ward-bound, guiding her through fog and rocks to safety ; at the same time, of course, making many acquaintances amongst masters or captains of various descriptions, and amongst others Mr. John Ells.

Mr. John Ells commanded the schooner *Hannah*, and a very dirty, mean-looking schooner externally she was, too ; paint and cleanliness seeming altogether dispensed with in her general appearance, which betokened more the character of a well-grimed collier than what she really was—one of the fastest clippers of her day. Never had

Martin been so much astonished as on mounting to her deck, from the boat, which with some danger had run him alongside, when it was blowing a gale from the south-east, making Ballyvoakan a dead lee-shore, and the *Hannah* was lying a mile or so off, with her head to the southward and eastward within three points of the wind, under a reefed foresail alone. Those on shore believed her some unfortunate disabled stranger, drifting bodily on the rocks ; and Martin was looked on as quite a hero when he declared he'd "go aboord, see git a stitch more sail on her, an' thry fur round the Hook. Wid a dawny bit more offing," he added, "I'd be sure iv Cove anyhow."

As the boat approached the vessel, Martin, surprised at her deserted appearance, at first conceived the crew had lashed the helm and abandoned her, until he perceived a pair of sharp black eyes anxiously scrutinising their proceedings.

"There's some iv 'em in it anyhow, boys," he said, as catching a stray rope flying to leeward, he swung himself up with—"Shove off, lads, or you'll be swamped ;" and away went the boat under the strokes of four powerful men, leaving Martin on the stranger's deck. And intensely astonished he was, not a living soul being visible but the proprietor of the black eyes, who, coolly approaching, accosted him with—"Well, my lad, as you're here, here you'll stay ; but what the deuce brought you ?"

"Brought me !" cried Parle. "Why, you brought me ! Aint I a Christian ?"

"Blow me," answered the other with a nautical hitch

to his waistband, "if I know what you are ; but you're not a witch nor a wise man, that's clear !"

"Begorra," said Martin, "maybe I'm as wise as my betthers, that id be lyin' here wid such a say on, an' nothin' undher lee but rocks id pick a periwinkle out iv the shell, takin' it quiet an' easy, as if its golshin on a sandbank in the sun yiz was, Musha. Is there no won aboord but yirsilf?"

"Six hands besides the boy, but they've turned in."

"In the name iv Heaven!" exclaimed Martin, "is it asleep they is?"

"I hope so," replied the man. "What else for them to do? Few craft will come out this weather, and I've a sharp eye."

"The Lord save us!" said Martin in affright, for he had heard of spectre-ships and water-sprites. "The Lord save us! are you a man at all? or where duz you come from, or where is you goin'? But shure, an' it's easy to know it's on the rocks yiz are goin'. For God's sake, wake 'em up, an' git a stitch iv sail on ; I'll take yiz round the Hook, or Poor Head, or anywhere, out iv this."

"I'd like to see you," laughed the other in a jeering tone.

"Ohone! ohone!" cried poor Martin. "But it's a mean way, it is, for a boy to lose his life be a madman, or maybe worse. Iv yiz will be dhrowned an' wracked, it aint wid the likes iv you Martin Parle id go. I'll make 'em see me," he added taking off his hat, and jumping on the tafferel; but scarcely had it left his head when he found himself flat on the deck, and the stranger standing over him with a pistol to his breast.

"Come, none of that, my friend ; you'll neither know where I come from nor where I'm going to ; and if I catch you making sign or signal, you'll never make another, that's all. I've had treachery enough for this time ; you came aboard with your own will, you'll leave it with mine."

"The devil a won iv me," said Martin, "faith I won't, nor you neither. We won't lave this wid our own consint, I'm thinkin' ; we'll be purvided for soon. Arrah, man, take yir pistle frum me ; duz you think it's a pistle I'm afeerd iv ?" In fact the pistol's production was rather a relief, as he knew such a weapon was unusual in the hands of a spirit, so he continued stoutly—"Take it frum me, I say, an' lit me up. Iv I'm to die, let me die like a man, on me feet !"

"Who told you you're going to die, Paddy ?" asked the stranger, good-humouredly, and putting up his weapon, for Martin's courage had completely won his heart. "Get up and tell me how you're going to die ; perhaps after all you're not deceiving me."

"Is it me desave you ?" cried Martin, elevating himself, all his ideas jumbled together. "Is it me, a desint boy, wid a pistle to me, an' he an' us all on the rocks in no time ? an' the crathers asleep, God hilp 'em, and it's there she's going as fast as she can tear."

"Do you mean that the schooner is drifting to leeward on the rocks ?"

"Iv coorse I duz," said Martin. "Why wouldn't I mane it ?"

"Iv coorse she's not, then," mimicked the other. "But you shall see," and taking a deep-sea lead, he hove

it overboard. Descending a few fathoms it took the bottom, and then Martin perceived from the line, the vessel was almost imperceptibly but steadily drawing from the land, in spite of the united force of wind and waves.

“Iv I hadn’t seen it wid me own eyes, I’d niver have bleaved it!” he exclaimed, all fear of immediate death vanishing. “What a darlint she is, an’ she not luck-in’ it!”

The stranger on this put a finger to the corner of his eye in a very knowing manner, and in this way was an acquaintance formed between our friend Martin and the *Hannah’s* master, which, though stormy in the commencement, ended by their becoming fast friends.

Ells was largely engaged in the contraband trade, and had just escaped a very treacherous attempt to capture him, on landing his cargo at another part of the coast some hundred miles off. He had been betrayed by one of his shore accomplices, and forced to run the gauntlet between two cruisers who suddenly pounced on him; one of them (the *Wasf*) having fired several shots. On his hauling right out to sea, he was closely pursued by both, but as the night got dirty, they sheered off, and Ells, after a long run, tacked and stood again for the land, though such a distance to windward as avoided all chance of encountering his former enemies. His cargo had been landed, but the old ground being now closed to him, he wished to open up communications on some other part of the coast for future purposes; and as he ran along shore, the neighbourhood about Ballyvoakan seemed from its rough nature to be the very place he

sought. Suddenly the storm broke, and not daring Waterford or Cork harbours, where there were revenue stations, he laid the *Hannah* to under small sail, and lashing the helm, desired the crew, who had been up all night, to turn in, he himself keeping watch. In this way he expected, slowly head-reaching off the shore, to be in a position for closer inspection when the gale abated. Not for a moment doubting his craft's capabilities, it never entered his head that others might take a dangerous view of his position, and when he perceived a well-manned boat leave the shore, it struck him as another attempt at capture. Nor was this notion changed on Martin alone gaining the deck ; it might be a ruse ; but when he saw his unflinching conduct, other thoughts crossed his mind, and questioning the man they became friends.





CHAPTER III.

FROM this time forth the occasional appearance of a dirty-looking schooner heaving in sight of an evening, and running shorewards, became a not unusual event at Ballyvooken. Had any stranger dropped in suddenly at night, however, he would have been quite astonished at the activity of the place. On such occasions not an individual had a wink of sleep through the hours of darkness. Girls worked with garments tucked up, old men worked, young men and boys rushed into the surf, returning laden ; whilst the women looked to home comforts, and kept the workers going. For smuggling, just the fascination for such a locality, had been eagerly adopted by its inhabitants. Indeed, there were few scruples then amongst persons of any class in society ; and many a keg of brandy, chest of tea, and case of claret, found their way where the dinner conversation might uphold strenuous support of the laws—but, well, no matter ; Ballyvooken became the rendezvous of Captain Ells and Martin Parle, his right-hand man : even Sullivan, despite their rivalry, gave in his adhesion.

Norah Flynn's father was dead, and her mother kept the little shop of the place, bacon, herrings, meal, potatoes, leather, nails, &c. being displayed under the maternal guardianship on one side; whilst the other was devoted to a traffic tending to the adornment of the person and improvement of the mind, where Norah presided over the sale of millinery and books. Here were threads and tapes, and needles, and gown pieces, and straw bonnets, and ribbons, and pins; altogether forming a complete El Dorado to the female portion of the community; whilst a few cheap publications with flaunting frontispieces, held the juveniles in a constant state of excitement; and when the achievements of the Immortal Jack or the Seven Champions, or Great Whittington, were displayed against the windows in gaudiest red, blue, green, or yellow, intelligence circulated in a wonderful manner; and then vigorous and repeated sallies became requisite on the part of Widow Flynn to keep open her communications.

There was a parrot too—a real live parrot. Captain Ells had given it to Norah; and how it did speak! There wasn't a boy or girl in the place, or perhaps their seniors either, who didn't firmly believe it knew as much as anyone, except, perhaps, "the masther," who, it was reported, had the Latin; and as it ran about the door and over the windows, and up the posts, quite loose, saying such strange and apropos things, there positively seemed warranty for the belief. The idea of its telling Luky Nowlan, on approaching with a grimed face, "To get away, the dirty dog." Why, what could beat that? Not a word fell from those around which it did not take

to its own use ; and between their strange remarks on the prints displayed, the likenesses they discovered in them to persons of their acquaintance, and the parrot's introduction of these sayings in its own droll way, the scene was often very ludicrous indeed.

Ells having many arrangements to make, besides a preference for departing under cover of darkness, had frequently to pass a day at Ballyvoakan. On these occasions the *Hannah* lay in a deep sheltered cove, where, with lowered topmasts, she was quite invisible a quarter of a mile off.

And such was the situation of affairs one day as he and Martin Parle strolled in sailor-like fashion towards the little shop of the Flynnns. Ells was a jovial fellow whom everyone liked — everyone seemingly in return being liked by him, but Parle was his especial favourite, and he was now expressing good wishes in regard to his affair with Norah.

“ You’re the man for her, Martin ; take my word, you’re the man. She’s afraid of Sull. See how pale she gets when he speaks to her ; that aint love, Martin.”

“ An’ what for should she be afeered iv him ? He can’t ate her. You don’t bleeve all that, iv crassin’ him bein’ unlucky ? ”

“ Well, I don’t say as how I do, but Sull’s a rum one, Martin. Something of the tiger about him, and no mistake.”

“ Why duz *you* thrust him, thin,” asked the other energetically, “ iv you think so, an’ he spyin’ about ? I seen him lookin’ mighty sharp t’other day at yer draft iv wather.”

"Who cares?" said Ells. "He's welcome to know there's seventeen feet of her in it. As for trusting people, I d-o-n-t k-n-o-w."

He went on, as if about to say more, but checking himself, laughingly added—"But I'm not crossing him in love, Martin, am I? I've a wife of my own at home, and a good one too, my lad."

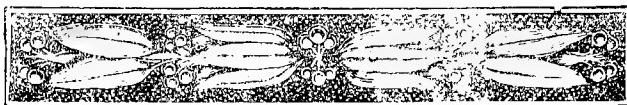
"An' is it afeered iv him you'd have me be?" said Parle, hotly.

"I didn't say that either," replied Ells. "But I'd say don't let your love get the better of your wit! Of course you'll court, Martin, that's all right and proper; but when he speaks to her you needn't look so vicious. I'm often afraid of your hands; and keep them off him if you're wise."

"For that," said Parle, "'tain't fear iv him id make me. To my thinkin' there aint much pluck in you, Sull O, but I'd scorn to be ballyraggin' the name iv her thru the place."

"Think he wouldn't fight, 'ch? More dangerous for that; a revengeful coward's the worst enemy a man ever had. Keep your hands off him, my boy; or if you ever have a *tift*, give him a wide berth afterwards till you get the smith to make you an iron waistcoat. But what's the crowd round Widow Flynn's for?"

"Oh, some new picthurs. Thim boys is the divils for picthurs."



CHAPTER IV

HE entire space opposite the shop windows was in the greatest commotion as they approached.

"It's the very moral iv him I tells yiz," cried a boy of fourteen, in tattered corduroy trowsers, with only one leg to it. "Luck at the eye iv him!"

"An' that's Martin goin' to leather the head iv him!" roared another. "Hit him, Martin," he excitedly exclaimed.

"Ay," put in a third. "Because he won't give up Norah Flynn to him. There she is under the three, an' quiet an' easy she's takin' it too. Morrow, Mam," added the urchin, familiarly nodding his head towards the supposed likeness of Miss Flynn. A roar of laughter followed the sally.

This criticism was caused by the appearance of a frontispiece to a book in the window, where a lady was represented as being rescued from a ruffian by the opportune arrival of a sailor, in the usual hat with flying ribbons, baggy trowsers, and small shoes.

The moment chosen for illustration was just as the ravisher bit the dust from a blow of a cudgel (something

thicker than his leg) wielded by the victorious Jack. A church-steeple appeared over some trees in the distance, whilst the fair one, with remarkably smart gown and blue girdle, serenely contemplated the entire scene — combatants, church-steeple, and all—from a green mossy bank, on which she reclined in the most correct attitude.

Sullivan not being a favourite with the boys, was doomed to give his name to the fallen man, who was represented very dark and scowling. Martin, on the contrary—a great friend of theirs, from his kindly manner—was just suited, in their minds, to be the hero ; and then the youngsters' quick wit soon found in the female a very natural cause of quarrel between the men.

“ Hit him, Martin ! ” shouted the lad.

“ Martin, Martin, Martin, hit him ! ” screamed the parrot.

“ Bedad, it’s proud myself id be to see Sull Dhu get that same,” observed another.

“ Sull, Sull, Sull, ah, ah,” roared the bird ; “ Sull, Sull, Martin, Martin, hit him, hit him, aw, aw, Poll, Poll, poor Polly.”

“ Dirty Sull,” prompted a youngster.

“ Dirty Sull ; dirty, dirty, dirty Sull,” bawled the parrot.

“ Here’s Martin hisself, an’ the captin’—let ‘em in,” observed another.

“ Ay, and wilcum,” cried a third.

“ Wilcum, wilcum,” shouted the parrot, with double force ; “ wilcum, Martin, hit him, hit him, hit him, aw, aw, Poll, Poll, Polly, dirty Sull, dirty Sull, dirty, dirty, ah, ah, ah, ha”—and up the window-frame and over the door the bird twisted and screamed.

"I'm thinkin' it's mad they is altogether," cried the widow. "Parrot an' boys, won's as bad as t'other. Git out iv that!" she added, shaking a rather formidable-looking fist at the crowd.

"Git out iv that, dirty dog," broke in Polly; "dirty dog, dirty Sull, dirty, dirty, hit him, hit him, hit him, aw, aw, aw."

Laughing, the two men advanced into the shop, Mrs. Flynn vainly endeavouring to restore order; but the louder she spoke, the louder bawled the parrot, cheered on by its admirers, until the deafened woman was glad to beat a retreat, leaving her tormentors in full possession.

Meantime, Ells and his companion had proceeded round the counter on Norah's side, and taken seats near the fair young mistress of the establishment. This being a liberty permitted to few: the captain's presence (always welcome) alone secured it for Parle. Norah never allowing Sullivan, applied the same rule to her other suitor; but Ells had laughed down her objections, and there they now sat within the sacred precincts.

"One would think 'twas a new married couple outside, fighting over their honeymoon," grinned the captain. "It's good for you and Martin to get used to it. Eh, Norah?"

"Musha, it's the likes iv you id say it," replied the girl, pretending to pout. "Bedad, it's too much sinse I have to be thinkin' iv sich. Arrah, lave it, will you?" she went on, addressing Martin; "lave it, an' go round. Shure it's Sull id put his two eyes on kippeens to sit there."

"An' did you ivir let him?" asked the young man, looking reproachfully.

"Devil a fut!" she answered hastily.

Just at this moment Sullivan himself approached, having heard the laughing and screaming.

"Dirty, dirty," roared the bird; "hit him, hit him, Martin, Martin, hit him, aw, aw."

"What's the matther?" he asked a youngster on the skirt of the crowd.

The small boy, taken by surprise, and unable (at the instant) to coin an untruth, blurted out, "Plase, Mr. Sull, it's only Tommy Jones as ses Martin Parle's leatherin' the head iv you, in the pictur, and Miss Norah's parrot's laffin' ready to bust at it."

With dark looks, two strides brought the angry man close to the culprit Jones, who was prompting Polly to all sorts of remarks.

"Aw, aw, aw, dirty Sull," he was just saying, when a backhanded cuff stretched him in the mud, scattering the others in all directions.

Sullivan eyed the prostrate lad, possibly intending further punishment, when his glance fell on the party inside, and he instantly entered the shop, Jones continuing the phillaloo with double force, while the parrot, screaming and wheeling and twisting over the window and down the door-posts, finally took its station on the little railing round the upper part of the counter, where, knowingly turning its head from side to side, it seemed to watch proceedings.

His heart bursting with a jealousy he did not know how to vent, Sull Dhu addressed Widow Flynn with

"Aint it a shame an' a schandal for a desint woman like you to incurridge thim blackguards?"

"Shame an' schandal yirsilf, an' take it back wid my blessin'," retorted that fiery person, "an' I workin' mesilf to an ile.* How dar you spake to me, man?"

Foiled with the widow, "Well," he said, turning round, "I knows, anyhow, there's them likes to hear me abused, tho' maybe they'd not take the chance iv sayin' it afore me thirselves." And he fixed his frowning look on Martin.

What reply there might have been, it is impossible to say, but Norah managed, unseen, to place a hand on her young neighbour's arm, and he certainly fancied he heard the words, "For my sake." At all events, he sat perfectly quiet, whilst Ells tried to laugh matters over.

"Why, Sullivan, my boy, you've lost all the fun. There's been a bit of a tongueing match outside, and, as usual, the Pollies had last word—women always have, you know."

Murtah Sullivan had spoken his first taunt under the influence of passion, but he well knew Parle fully felt it, and yet had let it pass unnoticed. To a cowardly-hearted man nothing is so delightful as acting the bully, so he went on :

"'Tain't iv wimmin I'm talkin', Captin Ells, but them as shelthers thirselves behind thim. An' a dirty mane thing it is too."

Even yet Parle remained still, though his face flushed like fire. The other's audacity increasing with impunity,

* Irish mode of pronouncing oil.

he was about to add some grosser insult, when Polly, roused by the well-remembered word “dirty,” screamed out, in piercing accents, close to his ear—

“Dirty, dirty, Martin, Martin, hit him, hit him, dirty Sull, dirty Sull, aw, aw, wa, wah.”

But the last word ended in a choking screech, for the infuriated man, forgetting all in passion, dashed the unfortunate bird to the ground, where it lay fluttering in the agonies of death.

“Oh, my parrot, my poor parrot!” exclaimed Norah, running round, but even as she spoke, Parle, clearing the counter at a bound, had Sullivan by the throat, pushing him backwards into the street, and hissing into his ear the words, “Coward an’ ruffin, you’ve earned it!” Then, forcing him towards a pool of water near the end of the house, he rolled him in head over heels; returning, without a second look, to comfort his sweetheart for the loss of her bird.

“Oh, Martin! he killed her. Poor Polly ’ll nivir spake agin!” she went on, whilst she hugged the dead favourite to her bosom. “The brute! shure it’s how he’d thrate a Christian iv he dared, the poor innocent thing that didn’t know what it spoke!”

“That’s it,” said Ells, trying to make light of the affair, though anyone might see he felt otherwise. “That’s it, my dear. Women never do so much mischief as when they talk what they don’t understand, as they often do. I suppose that’s why all parrots are Pollies. But never mind; if Martin ’ll come over with me this trip (fear I’d forget it), I’ll give you another; talks twice as much, and screams—lord how it does scream! I backed it once against the

church bells in our place, and the ringers hadn't a chance. Beat them hollow, in spite of two glasses of gin apiece, and unlimited bread-and-cheese. My Poll had the last word—had indeed—positive fact."

During this speech he kept (unseen by Parle) winking at Norah, in a manner conveying to her that he had reasons for wishing to withdraw the young man for a time from Ballyvoakan. Guessing that something had occurred between him and Sullivan (with whose revengeful disposition she was well acquainted), the girl at once smothered her own grief, feigning the greatest anxiety that her lover should embrace Ell's offer, and return with this wonderful bird.

"Do, Martin, do go. Shure I'll nivir forgit it to you. I wouldn't gratify that dirty black baste iv a man, to see the throuble he put on me, an' I idout me pet parrit; shure the shop id be nothin' idout a parrit, Martin."

"Can't the captin bring it hisself?" said Parle, suspiciously. "What fur should I go?"

"Me!" demanded Ells. "Is it me? I'd forget it before I was half way across. It's out of sight out of mind with me."

"There's manymight do that same," remarked the other scratching his head, and looking from Norah to Ells, and from him to the widow, who had remained in a wonderful state of quietude during the entire affair.

No sooner, however, had she encountered Martin's look, than, springing at once into activity, she rushed from her own side into the space between the two counters opposite the door, and, seizing him by the breast, wheeled him with a jerk face to face with herself.

"Is it afeered iv *that*, you is?" she thundered. "Is it? let him darken me door, iv he dar, that's all! Let me catch him throw the dawnyest luck at her," pointing to Norah; "an' that I miten't but I'll cut the ugly head off you, Sull O, wid this!" she added, flourishing a formidable-looking bacon-knife.

"Thank ye, Mam," said Martin, delighted at her words, but rather nervous at the close proximity of the bacon-knife.

"Don't spake to me!" she went on. "Incurridge blackguards, indeed—an' to me face! Luck at home fur 'em, ye black-harted riprobaite; aw thin, haw, haw!" laughing hysterically. "Wasn't it grate the way you rowled him in the pond? anyhow, you done that illigant! You may go to Chaney, my boy, iv you likes, fur him or his coortin'; and when the crather cumbs, won't I make it screech dirty Sull. An' it's dirty enuf yiz was, risin' frum the pond! Bedad, I'll niver forgit it, an' I kilt entirely wid the laffin'."

With the last word, Widow Flynn retired to her corner, subsiding into a chair in a state of extreme prostration.

"Well," demanded Martin, "you won't forgit me, Norah—you won't be like what the captin ses?"

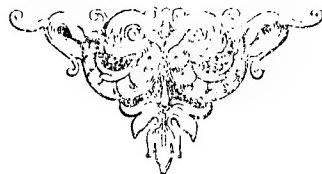
The girl's lips were silent, but her eyes spoke eloquently enough.

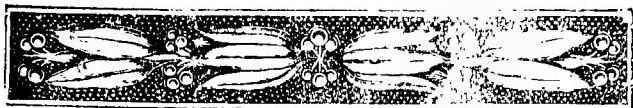
"Then I'll do your biddin' idout more words," he continued. "My life's in your keepin', Norah. Good-bye," holding out his hand; "shure you won't be hard on me whin I comes back?"

"Good-bye, Martin," she responded, with a warm grasp and a look of love shining in her moist eyes. "Good-bye,

an' God bless you ; 'twon't be fur long. You dun me biddin' now, maybe someone id do another body's biddin' next." Turning to Mrs. Flynn,—“Good-bye, Mam,” said Martin; “an’ I’m very obleeged to you fur yer friend-ship.” But that lady, her bosom yet palpitating with ex-citement, exclaimed,—“Whin I was a girl, ‘taint that way I’d part a boy was crassin’ the salt say at my word.”

Reading in Norah’s face consent, through her blushes, Martin passed over and kissed her more than once, whilst Ells and the mother seemed in close conversation; both men then left, one of them scarcely feeling the ground he walked on.





CHAPTER V

“**O**U’LL have a good watch-dog in the widow,” remarked Ells, as they walked quickly to Parle’s residence. “Wouldn’t advise him to come within reach of *her* chain. Make up your kit quick, we’ve no time to lose ; but, hallo, if that isn’t our friend waiting at the door.”

“No, no, my lad,” he muttered, as if apostrophising Sullivan, who was yet some way off. “No, no, we’ll have no knife-work just now. I’ve a little thing here to stop that ;” alluding to a piece of whalebone with a lump of lead at each end, which the captain always carried when on shore.

To his astonishment, however, the man approached Parle with a smooth countenance ; and, holding out his hand, said, “I deserved what I met, fur I forgot mesilf wid the passhin the boys put on me.”

“W-h-e-w !” went Ells, with a gentle whistle.

But Martin was just in the humour to shake hands with anybody. The superiority he now felt sure of possessing in Norah’s affections made him generous, and at once he accepted the offer ; with—“I’d have stud a good deal, Sull, but bedad I couldn’t stand *that*.”

Captain Ells, who had never taken his gaze off, observed Sullivan seize the under lip between his teeth as in a spasm, whilst his face became darkly pale ; but he only replied, turning away, “ Say no more, we’re friends now, I suppose ? ”

The captain remained silent until Sull had got some distance ; then, with a little chuckle, remarked, “ Honest-hearted chap that ? Quite mistook him ! ”

“ Thruen enuf fur us both,” was the reply.

“ To be sure it is ; but get your things. Hurry ! ”

In a quarter of an hour they were on board, and in an hour the *Hannah* was under sail. As she got in motion, Martin was looking towards Norah’s house, fancying he saw her, when Ells came close, saying, in a low tone, “ How far do you think that shore is from us ? ”

“ Why,” answered the other, “ maybe fifty or sixty yards.”

“ Just so,” was the reply. “ Well, you’ve escaped the other world, this time, by exactly that distance ! Oh, you may stare ; but it’s true. If you were over there, I’d not give fourpence for your life any minute.”

“ My life ? ”

“ Ay, yours. *You* didn’t see Sullivan’s face ; I did. If ever there was murder in a face, ’twas there.”

“ An’ ’twas fur fear you tuck me wid you ! Iv I’d a known it, I wouldn’t have gone for morthial man. I aint afeered iv him, nor no one, an’ I don’t think he’d do the like. He’s crass an’ he’s sulky, I don’t say he aint ; but the likes iv that. Anyhow, I wouldn’t skulk from no won.”

“ Faith, we all know you’re foolish and positive enough,

Martin, but what could we do when you didn't get the waistcoat from the smith as I told you?"

Could Parle have been aware of the feelings with which one individual beheld his departure from the shore, it is probable he might have felt more grateful to the master of the *Hannah* than he did. Stamping his foot in impotent rage, Sullivan threw his dark scowl across the waste of waters, each moment increasing between himself and the object of his hatred.

"Gone frum me!" he muttered. "'Twas that Ells done it; I'd have humbugged hisself, but t'other won seen it. Tuck him away afeered iv me—I wid the mark iv his hand on me, and no rivinge! No, but what am I sayin'? Maybe it's fur the best. 'Tis poor rivinge it id be iv a man war found out. I aint fit fur it now—I'd go too suddint; but iv I don't have it yit, may all the divils in hell have me. Wid me passhin an' that cursed burd, I'm afeered Norah 'll nivir make it up: anyhow I'll thry. Iv I could only do it soft! I'll thry hard. Iv I fail, let them all mind—Ballyvoakan 'll nivir forgit me. I'll have it towld her how sorry I am—that the grief 'll nivir lave me till she makes friends; an' how I'd give me heart's blood for her sake, an' how I forgave all he dun because I vexed her. An' now I'll go home an' say nothin'. He won't be back these two months; I'll work aisy, an' not spile it again wid me timper."

In consequence of this determination, day after day passed without Norah seeing anything of Sull Dhu, and the resolutions with which she had armed herself to resist advances, seemed likely to rust from want of the necessity for use. The widow, too, who at first made a great show

of the bacon-knife and her intentions, began by degrees to withdraw her mind altogether from the subject ; and, but for the loss of the parrot, things had reverted nearly to their original state. It was the month of March, and the *Hannah* was not expected before the 21st of May, on which evening she was to be looked for. About six weeks prior to this, Mrs. Mallowney entered the shop, in which Norah was sitting, to purchase a skein of thread, and casually remarked—" Shure, Mam, it's lonely the place is idout the burd, the crather. Bad cess to him that kilt it ! "

" Indeed," replied the girl, " I misses it, but don't spake hard agin the unfortunate man. It's pity an' not blame him I duz, when the passhin gits the betther iv him."

" Bedad thin, you might say that iv you seen him," responded Mrs. Mallowney ; " the mother that owned him wouldn't know him this blessed hour, an' it's thinkin' I am the heart's bruck acrass in him."

" Why, what's the matter wid him ? " said Norah, a little curious.

" Musha thin, mysilf can't well say what's over him, but purshuin to me an' the way he sits wid his chin on his fist luckin' into the fire, an' the blowin' iv sighs that cumbs out iv him, me jewel, you'd think 'twas kindlin' the turf on the greesha he was."

" Maybe it's bad with the fever he is, God betune us."

" 'Twas jist that same war in me own hed," replied her customer, " an' he comin' in among the six childher, not to spake iv the husband's brother's wife's cousin's dau'ter, a little thuckeen iv a girl does be tidyin' the house for us,

an' the likes iv that. An' I up an' I axes him, 'Arrah,' ses I, 'Sull asthore, is it the fever (glory be to God) that's over you?' 'No, thin, Mrs. Mallowney, Mam,' ses he, 'it aint.' 'An' what's ailin' you intirely?' ses I; 'shure the half iv you aint in it.' 'Oh, but it's the hart's dyin' off in me buzzum for the way I threated that darlint girl,' ses he; 'an' didn't you hear I kilt her pet burd?' ses he. 'I did,' ses I. 'Well,' ses he, 'I wish I'd have kilt mesilf first, as I ought, Mam,' ses he, 'an' roasted mesilf, feathers an' all,' ses he. 'Iv she'd et me it's more nor I desarved,' ses he, 'an' shure it's worse nor that I got, an' bore idout risin' a finger, because I vexed her,' ses he. 'An', Mrs. Mallowney, Mam,' ses he, 'fur yer life nivir say a word to her about it, till I'm in the ground; it's there I'll soon be,' ses he. But murther in ages," exclaimed the narrator, suddenly, "iv it aint gone an' towld all, I dun, an' kill me he would iv he know'd it."

A good deal of this went to Norah's heart. She knew the man loved her, and that he had committed the rash act in passion. The dismal picture drawn by Mrs. Mallowney touched her much.

"You may tell him I forgive him," she said, "but fur yer life don't minshin his name furnint my mother; she's intirely agin him."

"Wouldn't you say that to hisself?" insinuated the woman.

"My mother id go mad, iv he darkened the door. Here she is!" said Norah in a fright.

Some time after this conversation it so happened Mrs. Flynn resolved to clear out and arrange a large press which opened under the counter on her side. Finding

continual stooping wearisome she brought out a straw boss to sit on, and was thus comfortably on a level with the shelves, her head below the boarding. Norah, engaged knitting, had altogether forgotten her mother's presence in the shop. Suddenly a little chap popped in, dashing as quickly out : this being nothing singular, the girl only raised her eyes, lowering them again to her work. Soon after, a shadow fell across the window, as of some one passing : the knitter was too late to see more than that it was a man. A minute more and Sullivan stood before her. He looked somewhat paler than usual, and a dark semicircle under the eyes gave a pitiful expression to his face.

“I cum to have yer furgiveness frum yer own mouth,” he said.

“Then you have it an’ wilcum,” answered Norah, “bekaise it’s pity you I duz, whin the passhin’s on you.”

“Won’t you shake hands in frindship, anyhow?” he went on. “I won’t ax more nor that at prisint.”

“I’m reddy an’ willin’,” she replied, “to shake hands wid all God’s Christian crathers in frindship. Iv you spakes iv more you’d betther not, fur I don’t want it, nor I won’t listen to it.”

“Brave you’d listen to others,” he said, his face flushing at her decided words and tone ; “ay, to thim id take a man unawars, and thin run away fur the fear.”

“Iv you manes Martin Parle, you manes a lie,” she answered passionately. “He went wid Captain Ells at my biddin’, an’ not fur fear iv the likes iv you.”

“Thin you sint him, afeered I’d make him pay fur what

he dun ; an' glad an' willin' he was to go," responded Sullivan spitefully.

"I don't deny," replied Norah, "that I made an excuse to sind the boy, tho' I didn't incense him into it ; an' iv you must larn, 'twas bekaise I knowed the vinom's in yer heart, I done it. It's sorry I am you ivir inthired the door, making me commit sin, wid the pisined tongue iv you."

"Then he'll soon lave it!" screamed Mrs. Flynn, jumping up like Jack-in-the-box, seizing the bacon-knife and rushing round, knocking her shin at the same time against a pitch-pot. "The curse iv Crumwell on yiz fur a pot!" she cried, rubbing her shin ; "yiz are everywhere!" Then turning to Sullivan, "Ye villain, what brings you here agin? duz ye want to finish her as ye dun the parrit ? See to this!" brandishing the knife ; "iv you don't lighten the ground yer standin' on, I'll make yer ugly face tin times uglier nor it is ; an' it's afeered I am I aint doin' me juty as I promised the day he rowled you so illigant in the owld pond ! And mark you, I shurely will iv you stop ! We don't want to incurridge blackguards here—ha! ha! Duz you rimimber yer own words, alanna machree? Bedad yer mind 'll soon be aisy, plase God. Whin he cumms back, iv she's sed by me, she'll stop nor stay, but just go wid him afore the Preest ; an' her heart's the same road long ago. There's news for you to put in your pipe, me bouchal ! An' thin lit me see iv you dar cum ballourin' an' bawlin' at dasint wimmin's doors, when we've a man to the fore—able, ay, begorra, an' willin' too, to rowl you in the pond!"

One would have fancied this enough to set Sullivan

frantic ; but at first, astonishment kept him quiet, for he believed Norah alone in the shop ; and when the widow popped up, her murderous attitude gave him a moment's thought. As her laugh ceased, seeing the ground completely cut from under him, his resolution was taken.

"Mam," he said to Mrs. Flynn, "you'll maybe rimimber the day you druv a man to the worst. Norah, I meant you well. I'd have dun me best fur you, but I'll throuble yiz no more, nor Ballyvoakan neither—it's no place fur me now."

Saying this slowly, despair adding to it a sort of dignity, he turned and walked out.

"Divil a won iv me but I'll let a screech afther him," exclaimed Mrs. Flynn, running towards the door ; but Norah interfered.

"For the love iv God, don't, mother ! the man's half mad as it is. Oh, mother, you were too hard on him."

"Bad luck to the baste, he deserved it !" said Widow Flynn.

In a few days after this it became known that Sull Dhu had left the place, it was said to rejoin his people near Ballynaskelleys Bay.





CHAPTER VI.

HE evening of the 20th of May drew to a close, and as the sun neared the western horizon on that day, there was an appearance of bad weather, which, with a sough in the sea, foreboded, the fishermen thought, heavy gales from the eastward.

"I wish the *Hannah* war cum, or not to cum till it's over," said one. "Iv she war here now she'd be safe; but I'm thinking it's a heavy say she'll bring wid her afore to-morrow nite."

Almost as he spoke a sail was descried, and the men collected in groups, discussing the probability of its being the schooner.

"Shure it's to-morrow nite he's to cum, aint it?" asked one of another.

"But I tell you," was the reply, "Ells is a mity cute chap, an' has a deal iv knowledgable things in that cabin iv his. I misjudge but it's smelt the gale he dun, an's here afore it."

"I dunna know that, either," remarked a third.

"It's him, I ses," cried a young man who had been for some time scrutinising the approaching vessel, with his

hand shading his eyes. “It’s him, I tells yiz ! I sees the piece in his fore-topsail where our Tim threw the pipe-light, whin they war puttin’ in the new bowlt-rope. Hurrah, boys, here he cumbs, wid a dhrop iv the right sort, I’ll go bail.”

And hurrah it was, for Ells was always ready to splice the main-brace after work.

Great was the hand-shaking which took place on all sides when the vessel was safe in the cove—a proceeding the difficulty of which consisted in the number of volunteers tumbling over each other.

“Now, my lads,” said Ells, “before you drink my health—I know you’re willing—there’s a little more you can do for me. You’ve a hawser or two, some of you, haven’t you ?”

“Begorra we have, captin, an’ more nor you’ll want.”

“Ay, ay, so much the better ; can’t have too many ; bear a hand, will you, hitch them together, my lads ! And, I say, no slippery knots.”

“Divil a fear iv that,” said the men.

“You can spare me a couple of your anchors,” continued Ells ; “I aint going to carry them off for tooth-picks, you know.”

“But you beats all, captin,” laughed the others. “Will thim two do ?” pointing to a couple on shore.

“First-rate. Now then, some of you jump into the boat ; heave one end of the hawsers aboard me. All right, pass it for’ard, men, and make fast to the bits ! You ashore, reeve the other end through the anchor rings, so ; not too small a noose—I want both to bite. Hand them into the boat, and, lads, you pull well out. Watch

my hand, I'll steer you. When I say *heave*, over with them ; there's no knowing what's brewing there," pointing to the sky. "If it came dead in, we'd have nothing for it but to warp out and trust to her wings ; it mightn't be so easy to run a line out with a sea on."

"Thru for you, captin."

"I say, boys, pay away the hawser to them. That's it, keep it clear. Now off you go ! pull for grog."

Away they went, a man in the stern-sheets paying out the rope, whilst Ells stood on the heel of the schooner's bowsprit, motioning his hand, first one way, then another, then straight on, until he had got several fathoms of hawsers fast to the anchors, in the position he wished, when a downward wave with the loud shout of "Heave," was instantly followed by a splash from the boat as the anchors were sent to find their watery bed.

"Now then," continued the captain to his crew, "haul in the slack handsomely. Do they hold?"

"Ay, ay, Sir."

"Belay then. No, not so taut, our motion might budge them ; ease off an inch—so—there you are. Now, boys, hurrah for grog. Some of you send across the mountains, our friends don't expect me so soon. Tell Moran I've the tea and tobacco for him this time, and tell Delaney, at the shop, he never dipped a customer's tongue in such brandy."

"Give me a glass," said Pat Walsh, pulling off his brogues—"Give me a glass, captin, and I'll go ; I'll tell Moran an' Delaney ibout the tay and tibacci an' t'other thing too, only I misrimbers it."

Ells handed down a bottle and glass to Pat, who eyed

them in a rather comical way, until scratching his head, he whispered his neighbour—"Shure it aint a grand thing like that," pointing to the glass, "I'm used to, at all at all. Bedad the bottle's good enuf fur the likes iv me," and next moment his face was turned to the clouds, with the bottle at his mouth, bottom upwards.

"Hallo!" said Ells, stooping over to seize it—"if you do that, you'll misremember more than my message. Why, you've drunk half a bottle of neat brandy at a drink."

"Nate!" cried Pat, "no nater thing you ivir seen. Shure it's me mouth howlds an exact glass, divil a lie. 'Twould be the illigantist measure on arth barrin' the holes in it. Halloo! whack, whack. Halloo!" and off he started like a deer.

"I hope he won't get into trouble from what he drank," remarked Ells. "'Twas too much for him."

"Arrah, what's to hurt him?" asked old Bill Leary, holding out the glass. "Iv it's sstrong itself, shure he put both hands to it. Musha, here's to you, captin, an' long life an' more power. An' here's to you, Martin asthore, it's yerself ill have it all yir own way now wid the Girsha—Sull Dhu's gone clane off fur ivir."

"Gone!" exclaimed Parle—"Gone where?"

"To the devil most likely," remarked Ells. "He was heading that way when I last saw him. Come on, Jack. You're too modest, I suppose, to look at your pretty face in a glass of brandy."

Jack Meyler was notorious as the ugliest man in the parish, and whilst he was laughingly shoved up as Handsome Jack, old Bill Leary was explaining to Martin "that Sull wasn't gone *therc* at all at all."

"It's only to Ballynaskelleys Bay he's gone, they ses. Sure it's his cumhither he thought to put on her agin, afther the parrit an' all, but the mother went at him wid a knife an' thought to skin him. They had to put a hot coal on her nose to get her from him. Devil word iv lie in it."

"Duz you tell me so?" said the other. And small time elapsed before he might be seen hastening towards the shop, bearing an immense wire cage, where swung a fine grey parrot, which, from time to time, poured forth screams amply justifying the character given by Captain Ells.

Norah received her lover with unconcealed delight; and the widow (having boastingly described her exploit in driving off Sullivan, and the advice she told him she'd give the girl on Parle's return), retired to the inner room, affording an opportunity in the situation of affairs. We shall pry no further into lovers' secrets, but when Martin left an hour afterwards, his head was very erect, and his step very light. He shook Mrs. Flynn cordially by the hand, and, as that lady afterwards informed a crony of hers in confidence, "She knowed be the stip *iv him*, and the blaze on *her* face, that Norah'd soon put a man at the bottom iv the little cabin. And why fur not, Mrs. Mc'Darmit, Mam, shouldn't she do that same?"

The schooner's premature arrival caused such delay, before those concerned could be assembled, that although hard work was not spared through the night, a good deal of Mr. Delaney's brandy was yet on board when the morning was far advanced. The people required rest, and it was resolved to knock off until next evening,

when the vessel could clear early and leave, unless prevented by the gale's blowing up.

Ells, fatigued by his exertions, turned in, but Parle, too much in love for sleep, having coaxed Norah out of doors, she proceeded at a later hour towards a high headland over the cove in which the *Hannah* lay, and where Martin awaited her ; there, seated amongst the rocks, intent only on each other, they passed some time, until he was roused by her saying, "She must lave him now an' go home."

Looking upwards, his eye fell suddenly on the sails of a vessel in the offing, and, pausing as he was about to reply, he examined this object closely. There could be no doubt ; a large cutter lay some miles off. The wind, about south-east, was blowing half a gale, and the stranger kept a free course several points to the northward of east, under a fore and main sail, but, as seemed strange to him, without a reef in either.

"Couldn't you stop a little longer ?" he at length said.

"Maybe it's vexed the mother id be iv I did," she replied ; adding, "You'd better not keep wid me ; it's only talking they'll be."

"I wouldn't much mind that, now," he remarked ; "only I'd like to know what that won's up to," pointing to the vessel.

"Why," said she, "what's the hurt iv him there ?"

"It's after the schooner he mite be," answered Parle, "an' the captin's a good friend to us, Norah."

"Bedad he's all that. Is it stop and watch a bit you will ?"

"I'll see more iv him won way or t'other, afore I

go, an' run up to you whin I makes him out," said her lover.

So they parted ; she homewards, he remaining fixedly gazing on the strange sail, which continued lying along the coast, but at such a distance off as rendered seeing her, except from this high land, almost impossible. "I'll soon know," he soliloquised ; "iv it's rite business he's on he'll lave us afore long. But aint it a quare fancy it is, anyhow—fur a man id be in a hurry outside sich a time as this—to carry only sail id dhraw a wether hellum right across, an' scarce get a mile an hour out iv her, an' she'd be morthial fast in a minnit, too ; there aint as much as a reef in, nor a stop on his gaff-topsail, an' what signifies the time he'd be setting it an' the jib ? "

Meantime the cutter, after standing on for an hour or so, suddenly swinging her bows to the wind, fell gradually off on the other tack, until she lay as far to the westward of south as she had before been to the northward of east.

The moment he saw this, Parle exclaimed—

"It's fur no good yer there ! I'll tell the captin."

Ells was speedily aroused, and mounting the rigging, glass in hand, one look sufficed—

"By all that's unlucky it's the *Wasp*!—they'll be standing in next," he cried hastily, gaining the deck. "Here, men, all hands, clap on the warp ; we'll balk him yet. Leave this we must, gale or no gale. Bear a hand. Buoy that hawser, and stretch along with it : they'll pick it up themselves. Haul with a will, men ; he'll be down on us in no time : one of you run out and clear away the jib for hoisting ; see all ready aft there to get sail on her," he shouted. "That's it, men ; haul, and away she goes.

Now you, Johns, stand by the helm ; mind, I'll cant her to port. We'll stand to the nor'ard and east'ard as long as we can ; do you mind ? ”

“ Ay, ay, Sir,” said Johns.

Leaving the *Hannah's* captain using every means to escape, aided by his stanch friend, Martin Parle, we must take our readers some days back, and to a different scene.





CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Sullivan quitted Ballyvooken, although determined on revenge, no regular plan had been decided in his mind ; revenge he'd take, but as to the how, remained unsettled. Not having met friends or relations for years, he turned his steps homewards in the first instance, as some time must elapse before his rival would be even in the same country with himself. Reaching the paternal cottage, situated between Ballynaskelleys Bay and the Kenmare river, he was received with open arms, and could he even now have conquered his bad passions, might have lived and died in peace ; but it seemed as if Satan, having infused hatred into his breast, resolved to place the means of gratification within reach speedily.

One evening, he heard it generally spoken of that two cruisers, the *Wasp* and *Kite*, were lying in the river, and that night he fixed his proceedings ; this was on the 17th of May.

About twelve o'clock next day, Captain Johnson, commanding H.M.'s cutter *Wasp*, directed a boat to fetch off from a certain point a person, whom he descried through his glass waiting there.

On gaining the deck this individual, a man in a large frieze-coat, at once descended with the commander to the cabin : after some time a signal was made for Captain Henderson, of the *Kite*, to come on board.

"I wanted you, Henderson," said Johnson, as the former entered, "to hear what this man says. I suppose," he added, turning towards the stranger, a scarcely perceptible sneer curling his lip, "I suppose I may as well speak plain at once, and tell him you wish to inform against your late companions ? "

"You may say what you likes," answered the other, gruffly ; "yiz can have 'em as I towld you, iv yiz 'ill do my biddin'."

"Quarrel ?" remarked Henderson. "Is that the cause, eh ? "

"It's no differ to you," grumbled the man, "what it is. I'll do as I ses, iv yiz 'ill do as I wants. Fifty pounds aint much, I axes no more ; only yiz must sind 'em all to sarve in the navy, or I won't have hand nor part in it."

"See here, Henderson ; he promises to bring us on that notorious chap, Ells, with a full cargo, for fifty pounds (reasonable enough). As for the fellows serving in the navy, it's there they must go."

"Sartin ?" demanded the informer.

"Certain enough. It's the law—I'll insure that."

"An' I aint to be minshinned in it, at all at all ?"

"How's that ?" asked Henderson, sharply.

"Why, whin I puts yiz up to it, an' what yiz 'll do, it's ashore agin I'll go ; yiz can pay me any time, I aint afeard but yiz will, an' yiz 'll take yer oath it's aboord

a man-iv-war they'll go. Barrin' that, divil a thrust I'd thrust 'em."

Henderson took the other on one side. "This is all, very well," he said, "but how can we tell if it's true, or what he's after? it may be a lie to get us out of the way, somewhere else. I'll tell you what I'd do—assent to what he asks, but as for quitting the vessel, I'd take good care he did no such thing. When we have the informer literally sailing in the same boat there can be no mistake; and if it's false, I'd let the men keel-haul him—you needn't know it—a hint would do."

"All right," replied the other laughing.

"Now, Sir," he continued to the stranger; "Captain Henderson and I agree, you shall receive fifty pounds when you perform your promise; you have my word the law will send them all to serve in the fleet; and as for bringing you forward we don't know who you are, and don't want to know, so we can't injure you; will that do?"

The party addressed not perceiving the omission of a guarantee to land him, or perhaps considering it implied, declared "it would," and the trio proceeded to business, which being despatched, Henderson left. Johnson was yet speaking to the man, when, to his astonishment, the latter perceived the *Wasp* was under weigh. Immediately, he demanded to be put on shore according to arrangement.

"I never promised any such thing," said the other.

"You've bruck yer word," exclaimed the informer.
"I towld yiz I wouldn't stop aboard!"

"Not I," said Captain Johnson. "Go, if you like,

only, as no boat leaves this vessel now, I fear you must swim. Come, my friend, if you've told the truth, you've nothing to fear ; if they're lies, I don't know how it may be."

They had now gained the deck, and the unwilling passenger at once perceived the cutter was standing down mid-channel, under full sail, closely followed by her consort. For better or worse, he was associated in the enterprise.

With a favourable breeze, the two cruisers soon found themselves clear of the Kenmare river, and hauling up for the Durseys, on a wind scant enough. Rounding them, Cape Clear could only be fetched by standing first out to sea and then in, or what is called making a long leg and a short one ; a mode of progress which, however tedious, troubled the commanders little, having plenty of time before them. By the morning of the 19th, the cape was weathered ; but the wind, which had backed to the northward and eastward, was dead against them, with a heavy sea. However, they carried on gallantly, and worked so well that on the evening of the 20th they had gained a position so close to the spot named by the informer as to be able to take it easy.

The gale continually shifting from one point to another, increasing in violence each moment, was now in the south-west, with a threatening sky ; but the two captains, in spite of this, met again to arrange their future proceedings.

On this evening then, or rather night, the same party were assembled as before in the *Wasps*' cabin, namely,

Johnson, Henderson, and the former's unwilling guest, who seemed as dark and sullen as ever.

"We are, according to his account," said the commander of the *Wasp* (who was senior officer), "only about thirty miles from the spot. Am I right?" he added, appealing to the informer.

"Iv I dun rite, it's howld me tung I wud, afther yer breakin' yer word," was the reply. "An' iv I tells more, it aint fur love iv yiz."

"We know enough to do without you," Henderson answered sharply. "But I'd advise you, for your own sake, to mind what you're at. You've brought us a long way; take care it's for something, I say, for your own sake."

"Ay, an' it's fur that same I'll do it," he replied bitterly. "Fur my own sake, not fur yours, divil a taste iv it."

"Come," said Johnson, "come, that's something like sense; it's natural for a man to take care of number one."

"Number won or number divil," exclaimed the other passionately, "I'll do it. Ax what yiz wants, I'll anser, nivir fear. Yez are about thirty mile."

"What I propose," went on the senior captain, "is to stand right out, and fetch in opposite this Ballyvoakan about noon to-morrow. As soon as I well sight the land, I'll keep her to the nor'ard and east'ard. By carrying only a fore sail and main we'll attract little notice, and have so hard a weather helm that, whilst seemingly pressed, we'll make small way: tack and tack will keep her there, and nothing steering for the place can escape our seeing. He tells me she is never

in until late ; but it's well to be on the safe side. *You* had better get seventy or eighty miles offing to the south'ard and east'ard ; then, if this wind holds, slant along nor'east until opposite this same village, and about four P.M. bear right down on it. By then we'll have him between us, and with your weatherly position you can do what you 'please. Above all, don't let him see you until he's well inside, or he'll be off. If by any accident he got in-shore of me, I wonder what water he draws ? ”

“ I can tell yiz that same, thin,” said the stranger ; “ I seen it mesilf ; it's sivinteen fut.”

“ My own draught, or near it,” cried Johnson ; “ where he swims, I can. Do you understand it all now, Henderson ? ”

“ I think I do,” replied the other.

“ I'll stand out at once ; the more offing I have, the greater chance of getting him between us ; that's all we want.”

“ Mind he don't sight you until he's well inside,” said Johnson. “ Mind that, or he'll give trouble.”

The two officers then shook hands and parted, the *Kite* soon disappearing seawards.





CHAPTER VIII.

CAPTAIN ELLS was perfectly correct when he announced the cutter in the offing as the *Wasp*. All her commander's intentions having been accurately carried out, she was there, the land within telescope's range, but keeping a sharp look-out to sea. Under small head sail, the large main continually luffing her to the wind, so deadened her way, from the rudder being almost across to counteract it, that she barely went two knots an hour through the water ; and neither gafftopsail nor jib being visible, it was scarcely possible at a distance to distinguish her from a large hooker. Thus, until three o'clock, did she keep watch and ward over the approaches to Ballyvoakan.

Towards that hour, getting a little fidgety, Johnson turned towards his gruff passenger, who, holding on to the main shrouds by one hand, was pressing his hat firmer on his head with the other, as he looked outwards in the teeth of the fierce blast.

“I hope your friend hasn't got a hint, and given us the slip,” he said.

“How duz I know?” replied the other. “Wid won

goin' here, an' t'other there, shure I wouldn't wondher iv it's seen yiz he dun. Yiz wouldn't be sed be me, an' cum quiet an' aisys in the middle iv 'em, at nite, wid thim," pointing to some four-pounders on the cutter's deck.

"What ! fire on a crowd of people in the middle of the night, you savage ?" said Johnson.

"Yiz ar mity tindhir-harted, to be sure," remarked the man, sneeringly. "There's somethin' I sees there. Is it a sail it is ?"

"Where ?" demanded the captain.

"There," replied the other, pointing to a small white object only just visible.

"It's a gull, I think ; but we'll soon know. Here, you boy, jump up there with a glass, and tell us what you make it."

"Ay, ay, Sir," replied the lad, darting up the rigging.

"Devil a use," shouted frieze-coat. "It's a burd it is, afther all; bad luck to it."

"As you're there," called the commander, "have a good look round. Do you hear, aloft ?"

"Ay, ay Sir," said the youngster, steadyng himself with the glass to his eye. "Nothing that way, Sir ; shall I take a squint at the land ?"

"Bear a hand, then, and don't be all day about it."

Sweeping the glass alongshore, the boy remained silent, until a part of the coast eight or ten miles astern was within his vision : then he hallooed out, "There's a schooner away there, Sir,"—pointing,—“creeping up under the land.”

"The deuce there is. What's she like? How's she heading?"

"To the nor'ard and east'ard, Sir. She's a smallish craft, with every rag she can stretch to it," shouted the lad, enthusiastically.

"Ready, about," was the immediate order; and as the cutter neared the wind, the look-out aloft might be seen pointing his glass now seawards.

"Sail ho!" reached the captain's ear, as the cruiser, everything drawing, sprung forward in full pursuit of the chase, now dimly visible inshore and far ahead.

"Where away?" demanded Johnson.

"There, Sir. You'll scarce see her from below; but she's rising every minute. It's the *Kite*, Sir," he continued after a pause.

"Ay, ay," said the captain. "How far off?"

"I can barely see his hull," answered the boy.

"You're a smart chap, then, to know him. Come down now. Hoist his number, Mr. Bulger; let us hear what he has to say for himself."

"There he 'goes, Sir," reported the mate, who had been watching through a glass the approaching sail, now plainly visible. "All right, No. 62."

"Signal him to hold his offing, [and stand nor'east," said Johnson. "It mayn't be Ells, after all."

We must go now on board the *Hannah*.

The moment her captain realised the fact of the vessel in sight being the *Wasp*, he divined she was not in that place without positive information. His having anticipated the time of expected arrival by a day, had probably thrown them astray in their calculations; but it was out

of the nature of things he could hope to remain secure in his present position, as, failing to intercept him outside, his pursuer would undoubtedly turn his attention shorewards, and not depart until he had thoroughly examined the locality.

His only hope, then, lay in stealing off, and gaining, unperceived, such a distance as might defy if it did not evade pursuit, and he at once bent every energy of his mind to effect this swiftly and silently. Clapping with all hands on the warp (his forethought about which was now fully apparent), the schooner was soon out of the cove, and sufficiently off to well clear the land to the northward and eastward. When the rope was hove in to within a few fathoms of the anchors, it being allowed, with the end buoyed, to fall over the vessel's side, a sufficient number of men were placed at the halliards of the flying jib and mainsail.

“Hadn’t we better turn down a reef?” demanded one of the latter, addressing the captain.

“Reef? no!” he replied. “We’ve nothing for it now but our legs; they’ll be short enough. Run along the warp, men; haul in over her quarter; hoist away that jib; starboard your helm; away main halliards with a will; up with him; over goes the warp. There she is!” he cried, as the *Hannah*, bending to the blast, slipped along the land. Before a quarter of an hour, she was flying to the north-east and by east, under every inch of canvas she could spread.

“Now,” said Ells, rubbing his hands, “if that fellow will only take his doze out there for a couple of hours, we’ll show him something. Ease her, Johns; ease her,

man—so, not too near, or the back swag will take a stick out of her. Here, you boy, shin up there; make yourself snug; and, do you mind, if you take your eye off that chap, I'll rope's-end you!"

"Ay, ay, Sir," answered the lad. "I'll have to hold on by my eyebrows," he remarked to a comrade, as he ascended to his airy position.

"Will you have a glass aloft there?" demanded the captain: "or can you make him out without it?"

"You'd better pass one up, Sir," he replied. "I can see him well now, but we're leaving him fast."

Tearing along at a rate which, if continued, would soon have placed them in safety, the *Hannah* had, within an hour, made such way as to be opposite the entrance to Waterford harbour.

When they fully opened the stretch of water between Dunmore and the Hook, Ells, who had been closely examining it through his telescope, gave a sigh of relief, as he said to Parle, standing near him,—"I *was* afraid of something there; but all's clear; we'll hold on till he's hull down."

"Halloo!" came from above. "He's at something. Now he's round; up goes his gafftopsail and jib; he's after us, Sir," roared the lad; "and with such a bone in his teeth!"

"Keep your eye on him," shouted the captain. "Luff, Johns, luff; get a pull on the sheets, men. How does he look for us now, boy?"

"He'd fetch us easy and to spare," answered the other.

"We'll put a stopper on that!" exclaimed Ells.

"Here, men, flat with them ; luff, Johns, luff. How is she now?"

"East, and I get a half south out of her at times."

"She'll do better than that. You forward there, do you call that jib and forestaysail flat, you lubbers? Aft with them, I say; belay there! How's she now?"

"Better than east and by south, Sir."

"That'll do; keep her so, steady. How does he lie for us now, boy?"

"He won't find it so easy, Sir; he stood in too far, and has to haul up close enough. He's hoisting lots of flags."

"Ay, ay," responded the commander. "Turn that glass well round to sea. Do you make anything out? Look sharp, now!"

"There's a vessel away right under the wind," was the reply. "She's standing up Channel."

"Hold on," the captain said, "I'll look at her myself."

When Ells regained the deck, Parle was struck by the alteration in his appearance. All the excitement he had exhibited since the *Hannah* got under weigh, was gone, and was succeeded by a gravity he had never shown before, but with unbending resolution in the firmly-set mouth. After a moment's thought, he turned in his walk, and calling the men aft, said,—

"Men, we know each other too well for me to hide danger from you; that vessel away in the wind is the consort of her after us. They are working together. She" (pointing to the *Wasp*) "means to hunt us between the islands ahead and the shore; the one outside, holding

her wind, thinks to balk any attempt at escape, by pouncing on us. Could we have stood on as we were for some time longer, we might have weathered the cutter out of reach of her guns, or given her the slip through the night. As it is, we must face one of them now, or two by-and-by, so we'll choose one ; and if we get outside him, and run to the southward and westward, he'll see the last of us. Attend then to me, have no bungling, and we'll show him our heels yet. When we go on the other tack, we'll lie a good south and better. So much astern as he is, and running inshore as he did, I'd expect to weather him ; but so close, he might easily take our spars out with his guns. Pressed as he seems to be, he can't bring a leeward one to bear ; they're pretty well under water, I should think. When he sees us come round and stand for him, he'll be somewhat staggered, and think perhaps he's got hold of a wrong one. You all lie down forward ; we'll steer towards him as close as she can lie. When pretty near, Johns will sheer right at him as if to run him down. He'll keep away at once, and shout. Then, men, jump up, and show yourselves ; run about in the greatest confusion, as if you'd only just discovered him. At that moment, Johns, throw the schooner right into the wind's eye, but mind, have her under full command ; she'll dart, if I don't mistake, with the way that will be on her, two hundred yards dead to windward. The moment his weather guns bear, he'll fire, but it will be only across our bows, and he'll halloo out to heave-to. I'll stand ready, and answer, ‘Ay, ay.’ He'll shoot past, and before he's round, there'll be a good quarter of a mile between us. We'll fill again on

the same tack, ease away the sheets, and run for it, with our head sou'-west. He'll not hurt us that distance with his guns, and we'll have the wind abeam, just where she likes it. Now, do you all understand?"

"Ay, ay, Sir."

"Then we'll go about, and you all lie down. Mind, don't show until I give the word."





CHAPTER IX.

WITH a wind abaft the beam, the *Wasp*, starting in pursuit, had every prospect of speedily coming up with the chase—which inshore to leeward, although lying well along, was much closer hauled. Steering for a time so as to cut her off, Captain Johnson, using all the means occurring to an energetic seaman, had just ordered a large square sail to be brought on deck.

“We'll double reef it, Mr. Bulger; the strain will be so low on the mast, I think she'd carry it. We must run up with him before dark.”

The men were engaged tying down the reef-points, when the look-out forward reported, “He's hauling across us, Sir.”

“Avast with the sail, then,” exclaimed the captain. “He mustn't do that either. Get all well aft, Mr. Bulger. Luff now; luff you may.”

But although the obedient cutter, bowing gracefully, neared the wind with scarcely diminished speed, the schooner, as ably handled, crossing her course, seemed so to dispute the point as to render it doubtful which

might weather on the other. In fact, Johnson, from anxiety to close before dark, had, in the first instance, run down so much of his windward gage, that he now found himself sailing very little more free than his adversary, who was carrying on in the most reckless manner.

“Even if he does clear us, it won’t be half a cable’s length,” exclaimed the captain. “See to the guns. If he don’t heave-to, we must knock something about his ears, though it’s almost a pity. How he does go it, to be sure ! why, he’s not two points from the wind. Eh, no ! yes ! but it is ? he’s about ! Do you hear, Mr. Bulger ? the chase is about !”

This was quite true, and the schooner, having rounded on the other hand, was rapidly approaching, hugging close up, seemingly with the intention of passing to windward of her pursuer.

“He must be mad, Sir !” said the mate.

“He’ll not be a hundred yards from us ; we may take every spar out of him, if we please.”

“I see no hands in her,” remarked Johnson, who had been examining the approaching vessel through a glass ; “no one but the steersman ; I can make his feet out under the sail. Are you sure it’s Ells ?” he asked the informer, who was holding on to windward.

“I wish you was as shure iv him,” was the tart reply.

“Load the guns, then ; we’ll throw a shot across him the moment he opens our weather-bow. Be ready to pitch the rest right into his rigging, men, if he don’t heave-to. I’ll hail him myself. Be steady with the guns, lads ; heave-to he must, Ells or no Ells.”

The two vessels were now within a hundred yards of

each other, the schooner dashing the seas aside like a mad thing, and lying so as to clear the other by some sixty or seventy yards. Suddenly, with a broad sheer, her bow fell off until it bore right on the cutter.

"Halloo!" shouted Johnson, aloud. "By the Lord, he's going to run us down, the madman! Starboard, starboard! up with it! ease away the sheets, or by Heaven he's into us. Halloo!"

At this moment, as if they had started out of the deck, the stranger's crew were seen running about and gesticulating in the greatest confusion, whilst the vessel herself flew right into the wind all standing, but not before a cannon-ball from the cutter, as she rushed like lightning past, dashed up a cloud of spray under her forefoot: the hail of "Heave-to, or I'll sink you!" being almost drowned in the report which followed.

"Ay, ay," was borne down the wind to Johnson's ears, whilst men sprung to the sheets and halliards, as if carrying it into effect.

"'Bout with her, Mr. Bulger," he exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from his forehead; "we'll show him how to keep his eyes open next time. What an escape! the lubbers were fast asleep."

But before the *Wasp* could be thrown in stays, having run free to avoid the collision, she had placed a considerable distance between herself and her adversary, which was largely increased by the other's enormous head-reaching. In fact, all had turned out so exactly to Ells's expectations, that whilst the cruiser (as rapidly got round as possible) was coming on the other tack, the frieze-coated visitor on her deck, who kept his eyes fixed on

the schooner, divined the entire affair ; and as he saw the *Hannah* falling off again on her former course, he exclaimed, with the roar of a disappointed wild beast, “ Be all the divils, yiz have let him go ; an’ I seein’ him there afore me wid me own eyes ! ”

“ What are you talking of ? ” demanded the irritated captain, who was beginning to have a notion he had been fooled. “ Who did you see ? ”

“ I seen me inimy ! me bitther inimy ! ”

“ Confound you and your enemy,” said Johnson. “ What’s the chase at now, Mr. Bulger ? ”

Just then his opponent was indeed acting in a most singular manner. Having by this clever ruse placed such a space between them as rendered the cutter’s guns useless, it was evident he should at once have run to the southward and westward, making his escape down Channel ; instead of which, no sooner had he refilled on his former tack, than, sheering to the north-west, and wearing ship, he stood dead before the wind, rounding his pursuer, and nearly completing the circle, then hauled up to the northward and eastward, lying exactly a similar course as when first discovered, but with a greatly decreased distance between himself and the *Wasp*.

“ Can’t guess what he’s at, Sir,” was the mate’s reply.

The stratagem seemed on board the *Hannah* so successful that her master, seeing the distance between himself and his adversary, felt his heart glad within him, as he gave directions to refill and stand to the south-west ; but Fate had something yet in store. As, obedient to her helm, the schooner turned southward, a blast more fierce than ordinary caught the jib, filling it with a jerk.

Immediately, a report like a pistol-shot was heard. The weather bowsprit shroud had snapped like a cambric thread. Perceiving what had occurred, Captain Ells rapidly issued his orders, for one moment's delay might have sprung the spar itself.

“Down jib—in with it—port your helm—steady—port, port, bring her round gently—overhaul the slack—men. So, ease away now. Forward there—rig another bowsprit shroud. Steady, Johns—don’t yaw, don’t yaw—all right with that shroud!—aft with the sheets, then, lads—luff, Johns, luff—I’m not going to beach her yet. Steady, steady—keep her so.”

This had the effect of placing the *Hannah* in the position we before described. It was now getting very late, and they were fast approaching the Saltees.

“We must end it,” said Johnson. “Signal the *Kite* to come down.”

He was obeyed: and the effect soon became evident to the chase’s people, for when within a few miles of the islands ahead, the vessel from the offing came in full view, bearing right down, and cutting off all hopes of escape, even could they have again risked the dangerous proximity of the cutter in seeking to get outside of her. So as night fell, Captain Ells found himself forced towards the narrow strait separating the Saltees from the coast of Wexford.

Just then, Parle, who had fallen into a reverie, felt a hand on his arm. It was the schooner’s captain.

“Drop down to the cabin,” he said in a low voice. “I’ll join you. As she is, Johns!” he called aloud, heartily, “As she is, Johns! Keep her so. No nigher.

Here, one of you fetch his coat," he shouted. "The night's cold enough for December. I'll clap some more canvas over my own spars, too," he added, laughing, as he dived under the hatch. "It wouldn't do to scare them," were his first words on meeting the other below : "only make things worse, but we're in a fix."

Then lighting a swinging lamp over the table, he spread a chart of the coast along which they were running, and drumming one finger on a particular spot, continued :— "That we are, with the two after us in this narrow place. It's certain capture to run back ; and this infernal Patrick's Bridge would make chips of us in ten minutes. God pity the vessel struck there with such a sea on."

"Tain't the say id hurt you so much, iv you knowed the ways iv it," answered his friend. "I knows iviry inch about as well as I knows that," opening the palm of his hand. "But shure what's the use ? Iv there was, it aint waitin' to be axed I'd be."

"I know that well," said the other. "If we could only get through ahead ;—but it's madness to think of it in such a surf. I'm sorry you're on board, my poor fellow. 'Twill be my last night's command of the old barkey, I fear."

Parle saw the tears fast rising to the seaman's eyes as he made this announcement ; and averted his gaze whilst replying,—

"It aint the say id hurt you, iv you'd watch the comb iv the wave, it's a frind it mite be, where the wather's scant ; but shure what's the use iv fifteen fut, an' sivinteen agin us ?"

The speaker was looking downwards, or he must have

been struck by the joy which flashed over his hearer's countenance at these words.

"I don't say," Parle continued, "but sooner nor be tuck I'd face it wid an inch or so beyant the fifteen, an' maybe get over, too; but what's the use, wid sivinteen agin us?"

He could proceed no further, for Captain Ells seemed suddenly seized with madness, snapping his fingers, laughing, and hurrahing absurdly.

"Give it me!" he exclaimed; "only give it me, my boy! it's a hundred pounds in your pocket—the pleasantest money I ever paid." And he shook Martin's hands as if he'd shake them off. "Give it me over that confounded Saint's Bridge there, and I'll make your fortune. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Shure, thin, what's the use wid sivinteen agin us?" repeated the other.

"Seventeen grandfathers and grandmothers and uncles and aunts!" was the reply. "*He* did for himself when he brought that chap inshore. If he had left *him* outside, we'd have had a grin for it. Now they're both after us, you dog. We've the key of the front door, and will trouble them to go round. Ha—ha! Look here, my pilot of pilots; see what it is to know something."

And opening a little book, he read,—“‘*Wasp* cutter, ninety-six tons. Thirty men, carries four 4-pounders, very fast, draws seventeen six.’ ‘*Kite* cutter, sixty tons. Twenty men, carries two 4-pounders, fast off the wind, draws sixteen feet.’ There's a useful hornbook tells where they *can* go and where they *can't*. Whisper: It will be high water in an hour and—”

The remainder was in his comrade's ear, except these last words—"The other is only for strangers and sham friends, you know."

Parle seemed now to be affected by the captain's disorder; a bright smile illuminating his countenance as he announced the fact of his having recognised Murtah Sullivan on the *Wasp*'s deck as they passed.

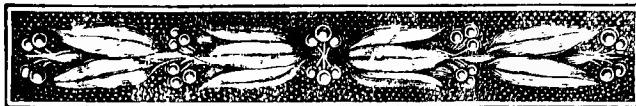
"An' he bleevin' in the sivinteen—"

"Hold your tongue," said the other; "let him keep his belief."

"Sarve him rite iv he war on it hisself. I mistrusted 'twas he done it frum the fust, and divil a nastier berth I'd wish fur him now nor that same spot; bedad it's it id soon take the wrath out iv him."

"He'd deserve it well," replied Ells; "no one better. I'd be sorry for the others, who only do their duty—tho' they shan't do it on me if I can help it—I'd be sorry *they* came to hurt; but they know too well to risk following through such a place, and they'll never see us under the shade of the islands."





CHAPTER X.

GHROUGHOUT the scene described in our last chapter, the actors had totally overlooked the little stern windows of the schooner when the lamp was lighted, and so much excitement followed that the error remained undiscovered. When, therefore—fondly believing themselves concealed — they entered amongst the deep shadows flung from towering headlands and rocky shore, they bore within themselves a far surer guide to their pursuers than the best-arranged plan could have devised ; and whilst Parle, who had relieved Johns at the helm, with steady hand and straining eyes, now one way, now another, guided the *Hannah* towards a pass across this dangerous reef through a sea boiling and churning into white froth—whilst he watched and anticipated the sudden lull under heights, and the rush and roar of the tempest as it swept down valley and gorge—the *Wasp*, far in advance of her consort, was on their track, guided by the two bright spots gleaming and twinkling through that treacherous glass.

“ Is that his light, Mr. Bulger ? ” demanded her captain, when it first became visible.

"Ay, ay, Sir," replied the mate ; "and kind of him it is, too," he added, with a chuckle.

"And what can he mean by it?" asked Johnson.

"'Prentice forgot to shut shop, Sir," laughed the other

"Oh, you think so, do you?—forgot the cabin windows. But he seems standing in very close there, don't he?—an ugly spot as man ever put his nose in; and such a sea on. That confounded bridge is somewhere about here, too. I don't half like it—there's a squall. We'll have to take in a reef, Mr. Bulger. Forward there!—do you make him out now?"

"Right ahead, Sir,—right ahead," answered the lookout.

"Don't lose him then, or we'll never see him again; these fellows are up to every dodge."

"He's won wid him, anyhow," said Sullivan, "that knows iviry stone here idin twenty miles. Martin Parle's well larned in these parts; I heerd him say he tuck ships an' ships the very ground he's goin' Folly him, you."

"It's not bad advice," remarked Johnson to his mate, *sotto voce*. "Keep him well before us; show a light abaft, below, ourselves, and signal Henderson to follow in our track until we're out of this. I wouldn't lose that fellow now for a thousand pounds. You're sure he draws seventeen feet?" he added to Sullivan.

"Didn't I see it mesilf, an' the sivinteen fut was undher wather idout a tub in her. Shure you don't think it's lies I'd tell?"

"Very well," said the other; "where she goes, we can."

A few moments afterwards, several lanterns strung to-

gether ascended to the *Wasp's* peak, being hauled down on a single light appearing far astern. "That's 'bout ship' for both," cried Ells, who had observed the night signals. "He's had enough of groping in the dark."

To this Parle made no reply, being at the moment engaged in passing round and round his waist a rope, one end of which was firmly secured to a cleet on the weather-side, so that in this way he was supported and steadied against any emergency. When all was to his satisfaction, he said to the captain, without turning his head,—

"Make them all do it, or the say we're cummin' into 'll sweep some iv 'em over. We'll have it clane fore an' aft, iv it brakes wid her."

The warning was not spoken a moment too soon, for an enormous wave catching them upon its back, the steersman sheered the schooner, taking advantage of its run. Onward it bore them aloft for a second, but the rocky nature of the reef over which they were passing broke up the mass of water from under them, causing a feeling to all on board as if their hearts actually ceased beating whilst the vessel seemed descending to earth's centre. Then, swift as thought, came a following billow, pouring its green flood, sparkling in phosphorescent light, over the weather quarter and sweeping all before it. The *Hannah* staggered under the weight of this shock, trembling through her entire frame as if conscious of danger. But the enemy had found no ingress to destroy her buoyancy, and in another moment she sprung clear of her briny adversary, leaving St. Patrick's Bridge behind her.

Drawing a long deep breath, Ells went forward to as-

certain the fate of his crew. Although terribly bruised, thanks to Parle's precaution, all were safe. The boat amidships, between the masts, had been lifted bodily clear of the vessel, and plunged amidst the boiling surf, striking in her passage one of the men, forcing him overboard, and breaking his left arm against the bulwarks ; but the friendly halliard held its fast gripe as death dashed past him into outer darkness. Every loose spar, oar, and rope was gone—a miracle seemed only to have saved them ; but they were now in comparatively smooth water, holding a course for Carnsore Point, until enabled to weather the islands shrouded in night behind them.

Seemingly but a few seconds had elapsed since the events last narrated, when suddenly, as if from ocean's bosom, upsprung a blue gleam, rendering all around clear as noon—masts, sails, spars, far more sharply delineated than they could have been under the brightest meridian sun.

“She’s on the reef!” was the general exclamation, as, for one awful moment the schooner’s people beheld everything. They saw the noble cutter, lately careering along so gallantly, helpless as an infant in the clutch of the waves, lifting and hurling her against the sharp black rocks beneath. They saw the pale faces of her crew, casting vain glances abroad on a world from which they were never more to receive help or fellowship. No ; the end had come ;—their bodies to the waves, their souls to Heaven’s tribunal. The united strength of mankind would have availed nought to rescue them.

For an awful moment all this was visible—horribly distinct ; then darkness, black, pitchy darkness fell ; and

the smuggler's crew knew that thirty brave men were passing to their account.

After the first, no word was heard ; if the men conversed at all, it was in whispers, as they witnessed the dreadful fate of their pursuer. With straining eyes they were yet seeking into the gloom, when high up into the vault above flew a rocket, bursting into innumerable sparks, and heralding her consort's approach towards the doomed cutter. Here there was life ; the spell of silence imposed in presence of death was dissolved under the warmth of human associations, and Ells spoke—

“Useless—useless ! Poor fellows, they're gone—all the Navy couldn't save a man.”

The vessel was literally smashed to pieces—her crew precipitated amongst the waves, their shrieks drowned amidst the swash of waters and the tempest's howl. To a fragment of mast one man yet clung with frenzied tenacity. Surge after surge swept over him : time after time he was rolled and engulfed, seemingly for an eternity, beneath the foaming waters ; but still he held on, fighting for life. Onward rushed another mountain, and as, unable to dislodge him, it dashed past, seeming to hiss and sputter in disappointment, there appeared from its midst a hand, which, meeting the piece of wood on which the man floated, closed on it with drowning grasp ; then emerged another, and a human head. The two hands took fast hold of the spar, which showed the additional duty imposed on it by a lessened buoyancy. It might have borne both, and saved two lives ; but there was a growl and a splash. The hands yielded their gripe,

descending with the pale upturned face beneath the flood : and the former occupant remained sole living object on the waste of waters. Onward he floated with the run of the currents and force of the wind, until, as the gray light of morning dawned, he found himself entering the surf at the bottom of the Bay of Ballyteigue. Weak, with only half life, the treacherous shingle gliding beneath his feet in the reflux, he had nearly given in, when an enormous wave dashed him senseless and far on the beach. But he was not dead. Again his eyes opened ; the sea had retreated with the ebbing tide, and he was lying high on the sands, under a rising sun, in his trousers and shirt, having divested himself of the rest whilst in the water. Far away were the Saltees, where his comrades had met their fate. How grateful should he have been to that Providence which had preserved and guarded him on such frail support as that small piece of wood now by his side ! But this man bent no knee in devotion ; merely wringing the water from his clothing, he turned and walked towards the little village of Bannow, which was close at hand.





CHAPTER XI.

FOUR years have elapsed since his Majesty's cruiser *Wasp*, with the entire crew, had been lost on the shoal of St. Patrick's Bridge. It was an old tale now, and the grass waved green and long over the mounds where sleep the dead ; green, for it was the month of May, bringing to everything fresh life.

Far inland runs a chain of mountain, barren on one side as rock and heather can make it, but fertile on the other as the Promised Land. The northern face of this wild stony barrier, having swept some distance with precipitate sides overhanging masses of dark stunted trees, bushes, tangled briars, and pools of turbid water, seemed suddenly to cease, relentlessly, and, assuming a more gentle mood, threw a spur round to the south-west, which was clothed in the most lovely verdure. Cows and sheep luxuriated amidst daisy sprinkled herbage ; bees flew humming on their sweet errand to and from the hives ; whilst the different concomitants of a well-to-do farm clustered around the homestead.

It was a long one-storied building, straw-thatched, as is usual, but bearing about it every appearance of comfort.

Inside, the kitchen's huge blackened chimney proclaimed beyond gainsay, that winter's nights found ample provision against cold within its wide-spread jaws, whilst the rafters overhead, groaning under flitches and "faces," hinted it had other duties also to perform. On each side of this apartment were two rooms, one beyond the other, and in the right-hand parlour, or "*room above*," as it was called, sat a man and woman with two children ; one, a little girl, just able to toddle, resting on a low boss leaned her head against the mother's dress ; the other, a boy, some three years old, had started from his seat, and was making for the door.

They are our old friends Martin Parle and Norah Flynn, taking their morning's meal in *the room*, as is usual with the better class of agriculturists. Captain Ells's gratitude had enabled him to take and stock this farm ; for, since his last adventure, he hated the very sight of the ocean. Mrs. Flynn was dead ; and Norah, leaving kith and kin, followed her husband's fortunes far away from Ballyvoakan, to their new home on this sweet mountain spur. And they were happy ; she, bright and joyous, as in former days ; he, cheerful and manly ; but there was a different light in their eyes from that of yore, softening and hallowing the beauty both possessed ; for they loved each other, and the future of their little ones ever before them gave a depth and tenderness to their affections such as nothing else can give. The wife was speaking :— "Cum back, Johnny, an' thank the good God for what you et. I wondher you'd go idout it."

"Larry's waitin' for me," replied the little fellow rebelliously.

"He'll wait, thin," said the man, kindly but firmly.

"Betther he'd wait, Johnny, nor God."

This was a view of the case which seemed not to have struck the boy before; so, returning, he lisped his infant thanks, and then bolted from the room to his friend below.

"Do you think he's safe wid that *innocent?*" asked Norah.

"Is it Larry?" said her husband. "He's as faithful as a dog."

"I knows that well," she replied. "But shure he's no wit, the crather. Maybe it's asthray he'd take the child; I duz be often dhreddin' it."

"Larry nivir furgits a road he thravils, an' he'd fight till he died fur Johnny."

At this moment, a rough croaking voice was heard from the kitchen, roaring,—"Me a hapeny! me a hapeny!" Then the boy laughed, saying, "Cum away, Larry, or I'll keep the hot sun from shinin' on you."

And it became evident this threat of withdrawing the luminary had taken effect, by the monotonous cry of "Me a hapeny! me a hapeny!" becoming fainter and fainter in the distance.

It was the poor fool, or innocent, as the Irish peasantry kindly denominate them, on his daily ramble. Where he had come from, no one seemed to know. Several years before, he appeared about the place with his wild cry, and never giving utterance to a single word but,—"Me a hapeny! me a hapeny! Haw, haw!" had required the name of Larry Halfpenny. Parle found him at the farm on taking possession, the former proprietor

(now dead) having given the idiot shelter : and on purchasing the widow's good-will, poor Larry passed over like any other fixture, retaining his accustomed seat by the fire, receiving the usual "bit and sup," and retiring at night to the barn "lock" of straw as he had done for years, but still expressing all his wants and wishes solely by pointing and "Me a hapeny ! me a hapeny !"

Towards little Johnny he had formed a strong attachment ; together they would rove for hours and hours, Larry carrying the child when tired in his strong arms as gently as a nurse ; more than once were they met in warm nooks, the boy fast asleep, and he, poor fool, hanging over him with canine fidelity. It was for one of such rambles they were departing when Norah expressed her fears ; but finding her husband had none, she dismissed them, going back to her household duties, whilst he proceeded to some work on a distant part of the farm.

At dinner-hour, when the labourers with their employer returned, it was for the first time perceived that Larry and his charge were absent. As this had never before occurred (the former, like all idiots, being excessively fond of food and attentive to the time of its distribution), some astonishment was expressed ; but one of the men saying he had seen them rather high up the mountain, it was thought the child's being weary had probably delayed the other carrying him. However, Norah declared "they should nivir go agin beyant where she could see em frum the house ;" adding, "I wondhers what takes thim round at all, an' nothin' but terrible rocks an' holes id frit'n a child there beyant."

"It's the frauchan-berries they duz be afther," said her husband ; "an' it'll make him bowld."

"Bowld or not," she replied, "I wish he war here. It's more nor won o'clock now, an' no sign iv thim. Misha run, Billy asthore, an' meet the two ; maybe it's fell asleep they dun."

On this, Billy Duggan took the mountain path, whilst Parle and his people returned to their occupation.

An hour, nearly two, passed, and the mother became seriously uneasy. She had marked her messenger high up, until, crossing to the other side, he was hidden from view ; so they must be yet a great distance off : and, becoming alarmed, she sent one of the girls for the master.

"Sure, Martin darlint, it's fritined to death I am about the child," she cried, the moment they met. "What in the arthly world can have cum iv 'em ?"

"Here they ar, Mam !" shouted Nelly ; "cummin' over the hill."

And certainly two persons appeared crossing into the path, which they descended slowly. Although it was some distance, Parle thought if the little fellow was walking he must have seen him.

"It's on his back Larry has him," he remarked. "Norah acushla, don't be mad wid the poor crather, he shan't go so fur agin. It'll be a start afore they're here —I'll run up an' meet him."

The notion of his joining the party inspiring her with a feeling of confidence, she re-entered the house, but before her thoughts could turn to anything else, Nelly, who had also run up the path, rushed pale and breathless

into the room : “ Oh, mistress, mistress me darlint ! he’s gone, he’s gone, the child’s gone, an’ Larry’s kilt ded intirely.” Norah Parle heard no more—she had fainted. Away then flew the light-footed maiden to the master with word that “ the mistress was lyin’ dead on the flure.”

What a reverse ! A few hours back and happiness was in the hearts of all ; now the poor husband is hanging over a senseless wife, with the thought burning into his brain that their darling child, the pride of his life, was gone for ever ; and how ? He had questioned the idiot—whom Duggan met feebly crawling along, scratched and torn, his face covered with blood, and one eye swollen to a frightful extent. The only reply was a piteous, “ Me a hapeny, me a hapeny,” and pointing upwards.

The moment Norah regained consciousness, Martin committed her to the woman’s care, with affectionate kisses and injunctions to be hopeful, as he would search every inch where the boy could have gone ; then taking two men with him, he departed for a thorough exploration of the mountain. Until they gained the northern side their course was rapid. Then with down-turned eyes the party proceeded step by step.

They were now on a flat rock overhanging a sort of terrace about fourteen feet below ; which in its turn towered at a height of some two hundred above a dark chasm filled with rugged masses of stone, bush, and pools of water scattered around in such wild confusion as to have gained for the place an unenviable name, being called in the native tongue *Poule a Dhioul*, or the Devil’s Hole. From the mountain above, where our

searchers stood, the legend asserted that man's Arch-Enemy had been hurled by St. Patrick into the abyss beneath — crushing in his descent this wall of solid granite, and strewing with its fragments the glen below. On which account the upper rock was named *Carrig-na-farre-Banaghá*, or the Saint's Rock. Here Parle was about descending when one of the men in advance discovered Johnny's handkerchief.

“God be thanked,” exclaimed the father, fervently, “our darlint aint gone that way! I dhreaded Poule a Dhioul iv all places.”

A whistle drew his attention, and he perceived the other assistant further on, stooping over something. In a moment he had joined him ; there lay the boy's hat with several shreds of his little dress, stained in many places with great drops of blood ; whilst the coarse vegetation trampled around, betrayed the scene of a violent struggle.

All was plain : at this point the child had been carried off ; his idiot guardian had here met his hurts, but where was the boy ?

“Oh ! where is he ?” cried the maddened father, “where is he ?”

“Masther, masther ! the eagles, the eagles !” No sooner had Duggan spoken these words than every vestige of hope vanished from the wretched father. His darling had been carried off by the feathered monsters who had their eyrie high above on the far-away crag, blue in distance. Without for a moment considering whether the eagles could carry off a child of such size and weight, he jumped to the conclusion

that so it was. The pieces of torn frock, the hat stained with blood, the idiot's lacerated face, and his ever pointing upwards—clear, clear, too clear, he had fought for his charge, but in vain ; and the cruel talons which had inflicted wounds nearly to death on the strong man, had long since rent piecemeal the mangled limbs of his tender babe. This very intensity of anguish gave him something like coolness, and calling one of the men, he said,—“Tim, go back an' tell the mistress (may God pity her this hour !) I'll stop out, an' nivir give it up, till I gets Johnny dead or alive ; an' now fur your life, mind don't spake iv the eagles. Just give her the word I sinds, an' slip out quiet wid the light laddher to the cross roads beyant ; an' fetch the owld cutlash in the barn ; they'll nivir kill no other child, I'll go bail !” he added, with compressed lips.

Through that wretched night we may well fancy the poor mother's feelings ; she had received a message from her husband, that he'd find the child dead or alive, but he was not found. If weariness for a moment closed her eyes, she would awake with a start to all her intense misery, and the tears pour over her fevered cheeks, as she thought of her boy on the dark bleak mountain side, far away.

But in the midst of all this sorrow, poor Larry had not been forgotten ; his wounds were washed, and although scarred and cut, he had recovered sufficient strength to occupy his old corner, where, sitting half-stupefied, his eye enormously swollen, he would at intervals ejaculate in pathetic tones, “ Me a hapeny, me a hapeny.” It was indeed a sad night for all, but

morning at length dawned, and although without further intelligence, yet the mere light alone cast a cheering influence on the sorrowing inmates of Fairy Lawn, for so was the farm called. And when the blessed sun threw its warm beams across the kitchen, there was not one but felt their dark forebodings moulding and softening into something like hope.





CHAPTER XII.

FHE earliest risers on entering the barn found that Larry was gone; he had slept there, as the straw bed showed, but he was there no longer. Where the mind is weak, we often see the bodily powers strengthened, enabling the mere animal to recover speedily from wounds which in a more perfect organisation would prove fatal. So was it probably with the idiot; recruited by a night's rest, he had started on his usual ramble, and possibly without a thought of yesterday's sad occurrence.

After breakfast, a little girl, Tim Rooney's daughter, put into Norah's hand a piece of crumpled paper, saying,—

“A man had gave her a penny to take it to the mistress.”

“What man?” she asked, opening it.

“He's sthrang to me, Mam,” replied the child.

But Mrs. Parle was already deep in the communication, which, whatever it was, seemed to singularly affect her; first there was a slight scream, then her eye brightened, her bosom heaved, and the red blood flew to her pallid checks. For a moment standing in deep thought,

the next she was in the room above arraying herself in bonnet and cloak.

"Arrah, thin, is it out you're goin', misthress ?" asked Nelly, seeing her open the house-door. "An' iv it is, shure, take Molly wid you, an' you so wake intirely."

"No," she replied, "it's a little bisness I'm on. Yiz 'ill luck afther the dinners, an' iv the masther's in afore me, tell him iv he haven't the good news maybe I has it."

"Glory to me sowl," whispered the girl, peeping through a split in the door. "Glory to me sowl, iv it aint up the mountain] she's goin'; I wondhers who writ it," she continued, taking up the paper which Norah had dropped. "Shure, thin, it's too bad it is," she went on, turning it round and round. "Musha, Molly avick, you that has the larnin', tell us what's in it."

"That's O," said Molly, anxious to display her knowledge. "That won there's O; I knows that anyhow. An' shure P cums afther O ivir an' always; there's a little O too, an' a Y be the curly tail iv him. Divil a won iv me but I'd know thim 'well, iv they'd stay quiet afther won another, an' not be goin' *threenahela* like a flock iv turkeys."

"What's the use iv your braggin' iv the larnin'," sneered Nelly, "an' you not able to tell a body what's in that dawshy bit iv paper. Iv it war a buck itself, now, I ud'n't blame you, but the likes iv that!" throwing it contemptuously into the window.

In the meantime Norah, having taken the mountain path, pursued it briskly until she reached the crossing to the north side.

"'Twas here he said," she muttered, searching her pocket; not finding what she sought, she seemed at first a little uneasy; but as if recollecting, went on, "They can't read, the crathers, an' be the time Martin's in I'll have the darlint agin, plase God, here 'in me arms. Thin shure I'd want hilp to carry him down, an' it 'ill be well to meet the *dhada* on the road. Aint conchinse a fine thing, thin, anyhow?"

Just then a figure appeared some distance off.

"There he is," she said. "Sorrow a word o' lie in it. Iv I'd brought Molly wid me, he'd have seen her, shure enuf, an' taken Johnny away fur ivir; I'll mind him now."

Thus on and on she went, keeping the man in view; at length, she saw him turn down the path leading in front of *Carrig-na-farre-Banaghá*, which towered over her like a huge giant, as following her guide, she found herself standing on the terrace at its base—but quite alone; the other had disappeared. Could there be a passage round? She examined and found none. Where could he have gone? A hand pressed her shoulder, and, turning, Murtah Sullivan stood before her.

If the vault of heaven had fallen, if the infernal occupant of *Poule a Dhioul* had reappeared, Norah Parle could not have been more utterly paralysed than she now was, as, with staring eyes and palpitating heart, she looked on this awful sight—*his* ghost in broad day. All that could be heard was the tremulous noise of her breath, inhaled through a throat convulsed in mortal fright, as she stood, with bloodless lips and chattering teeth, beneath his gaze.

At length, terror could do no more, and, sinking on her knees, up went the right hand, for no spirit can withstand the holy sign.

" You needn't, Norah Flynn," burst forth the phantom, with a mocking laugh. " You needn't—keep it now ! I'm no more dead nor yirsilf."

At a bound the woman stood erect. Under other circumstances, it would have caused her deadly fear, finding herself alone with him in such a place ; but now—at least, he was a living man. " Oh, thin, glory be to God," she exclaimed, " you warn't dhrowned afther all ? "

" No," he replied, with a sneer. " No, I wouldn't lave me owld sweetheart in that cowld way ; I kept alive apurpose fur you."

" Sull agra," she said, again becoming pale, " shure it's a wife I am now ; and oh, Sull, the boy, the boy ! You've a heart an' a sowl wouldn't let you hurt the darlint. Oh, give him to me, give him to me, an' I his mother ! "

But a glance into the eyes of the ruffian before her destroyed all hope. There was neither pity nor mercy there. As she looked they actually seemed to grow larger and larger, whilst his lips trembled with passion.

" It wasn't wanted—it wasn't wanted," he shrieked, " to remimber me iv his brat bein' yours ! But yiz had yir day, an' it's mine now."

" Oh, marcy, marcy, Sull," she screamed, dropping on her knees. " We nivir dun you hurt nor harm."

" Look at *me*," he cried, " an' thin say it agin, iv you dar. What am I ? Listen ! I'm a devil ! Was I always so ? Hadn't I a heart to love as well as he ? What's in it now ? Will I tell you ? "

"O Lord, save me!" groaned the woman, rocking to and fro.

"Ay, an' he won't. Where is he now to save you, an' the devil wid me to hilp me? He is wid me, I tells you, an' I disarves it. There aint a sin you reads of in your buck afore confisshin, there aint won but I dun — oftin, oftin, oftin, an' all fur me rivinge. You wants the child, duz you? You'll git him, thin."

And moving towards the face of the rock, he entered a small cavity, returning in a short time with Johnny in his arms.

Poor little fellow, torn, dirty, his face blistered with tears, how unlike what she had last seen him! But there he was alive, holding out his arms; and in an instant the mother was devouring him with kisses, whilst the sobs and struggles of the boy to escape were most pitiful.

"Let me home, I want to go home! Oh, mammy, mammy, take me home!" he cried, vainly struggling in the man's grasp.

Sullivan permitted a full interchange of affection.

"You'r mity fond iv him," he said. "It's but dasent, whin you loses what you're so fond iv, to pay the findher; an' yiz so grand an' rich, too."

"Oh, anything, ivirything," she exclaimed. "Say what, an' I'll give it."

"Will you?" he replied, seating himself with the child on a shelf of the rock. "Well, Norah, you knows how I loved you."

"Don't speak iv it now, for the love iv God! an' I a married woman."

"What!" he roared, springing to his feet, and holding the little fellow over the cliff. "Will you nivir let me forget it? I'll sind your brat to join the Dhioul below!"

"Sull! Sull!" she screamed, again sinking on her knees. "Take me life, and spare him!"

"Will you buy him, thin?" shouted the ruffian. "You talk iv yir life—I won't ax it, nor nigh so much. I only axes you to stay quiet an' aisly wid yir owld sweetheart here, till he sinds you back."

"Sweet Savor iv man, have marcy on us and save us!" was the only reply from the despairing creature.

"Will you spake?" he cried furiously. "Promise it, an' I'll swear I'll give the child back safe an' sound, an' no hurt shall meet him. Iv you don't, that I may nivir see another night, an' die unrivinged, iv I don't pitch him down afore your face: an' it won't betther you neither. Spake," he continued, raising and drawing back his right arm with the child. "You've a minit more, an' no longer!"

"Sweet Savor iv man, have marcy, and save us wid thy power," moaned the unfortunate woman, as she saw her babe about being hurled over. "Sweet Savor iv the world," she was continuing when (was it a miracle?) a dark body passed right over her, and in a twinkling the boy lay safe and free at her very feet.

To catch him up with desperate energy, and rush back to the rock, was the work of a moment. Then a deadly weakness came over her, and as she saw a black mass rolling and tumbling on the terrace, under the full belief of a supernatural presence, she fainted. We must now go back.



CHAPTER XIII.

HE idiot and his charge had wandered along, the boy running after butterflies, whilst the former culled for him the finest blue mountain berries. In this way, they had got beyond *Carraig-na-farre-Banagh*, when Johnny discovered the handkerchief he wore round his neck was gone. Communicating the loss in some way of his own—for they seemed to understand each other without words—they turned homewards, making eager search for the missing article. Whilst so occupied, a scream caused Larry to look up, and he saw the little fellow struggling in the grasp of a large, dark-looking man. Like a dog, he sprang at once on the stranger, who at first confined himself to the defensive and securing his prize; but receiving sundry kicks and cuffs, he suddenly dropped his burden, and then delivered a tremendous upblow on his opponent's eye, which stretched him senseless, covering everything around with blood. Catching hold of the inanimate body by the heels, he now commenced dragging it along with the seeming intention of throwing it over the cliff. Being foiled in this, however, from its great weight, he contented himself with hurling it a few yards, and again seizing the boy, who had remained per-

fectedly paralysed, he took the downward path, leading to the base of the rock. Through a narrow cleft, he there entered a small cave, and flinging Johnny to the ground, struck a light. Then, bringing forth a goodly-sized bottle, and filling himself a couple of glasses, he disposed of them with evident gusto. A pipe was next prepared, and, placing it between his lips, he seated himself on a stone, the picture of successful villainy. All this time, the large round eyes of the child never quitted his face ; and when at intervals the man gave way to dreadful laughter, the little teeth chattered, and all the horrid tales he had ever heard crossed poor Johnny's mind. But nothing can keep sweet sleep from infancy ; and, in the midst of his terrors, it sealed the lids of our little prisoner. When he awoke, he was fast bound, hands and feet, but the big stone was vacant, his tyrant was gone. Later in the day, he returned.

“ You didn't run away,” he said, with one of his grins.

“ No, Sir,” faltered the frightened boy.

“ Not you ; you loves me betther nor 'em all, eh ? ”

“ No, Sir,” said the child ; “ I loves daddy an' mammy best, an' I don't love you at all.”

“ Why not, eh ? ”

“ Cause yir wicked an' ugly, an' daddy and mammy's purty an' good.”

“ Howld yir tongue, you devil's cub you, or I'll cut it out,” roared the man, approaching with an open knife. Johnny thought there was an end of him, as the man leaned over with the naked blade ; but it was only to cut the cords that bound him.

“ Now ate,” said the ruffian, handing him a piece of

bread and a cup of milk. "I'll want you alive an' kickin' to-morrow."

But spite of the safety of his tongue, the little fellow could scarcely force a bit down his throat.

"Iv you don't ate as I tells you," shouted the man, "I'll pull iviry tooth out in yir head!" Under this threat the food disappeared.

"Now you'll go to sleep; and, alanna, we'll sleep together," said his tormentor. "You'll dhrame it's the mammy's in it," he added, brutally.

"Oh, mammy, mammy, mammy!" sobbed poor Johnny. "Mammy, mammy! my own mammy!"

"Howld yir tongue, or I'll put you where you'll nivir see her agin," cried the man, taking him up and throwing him on some straw in a corner. "Now go to sleep at wonct, I tells you."

The boy closed his eyes in terror; but sleep soon over-powered him. When he again opened them his captor was engaged writing, a board across the former seat serving as a table. When he had finished, he folded the paper, putting it into his pocket, and laying some food before the child, compelled him, by threats, to eat; afterwards, renewing the ties on his arms, he left him in the straw, with injunctions "to howld his whist, or he'd pay dear fur it," and quitted the cave, Johnny seeing no more of him until, suddenly entering, he cut the cords from his legs and arms, and bore him to the presence of his mother.

However, we must follow him as he walked down the path towards Fairy Lawn. Before very long, he met a little girl.

"Duz you know Mrs. Parle?" he asked.

"Shure why wouldn't I, and we living undher her, man?"

"Iv you take her this paper," he said, "I'll give you a penny."

This was so grand an offer, that, resigning her morning's frauchan-picking, little Mary Rooney at once returned, and, as we have seen, delivered to Norah the following:—

"Won that ronged you ripints: yer boy is safe wid him. Iv yir bowld enuf to meet him on the top rode, cum alone. Iv you 'tempt to bring morthal sowl wid you, ye'll nivir see the child agin; so take the warnin' I swares it, an' I watchin' you this minit.—A RIPINTINT SINNER."

This note, so artfully written, he fully expected would bring within his reach the victim he sought. Her husband he knew, from last night's conversation with the men, to every word of which he had been a listener, was far away at the Eagle's Craig; and there was not a living creature to stand between her and himself.

But just at the same hour another individual was also on the mountain, though out of his sight. At the first light Larry had left his lair, and, far from being oblivious of yesterday's occurrences, was quite full of them. Not even waiting for breakfast, he wandered up and down, thinking of his lost little friend, but without any fixed purpose; at length he found himself far above the scene of his mishap, and moved downward towards the flat top of *Carrig-na-farre-Banagha*, where, under the combined effects of hunger, grief, and weariness, he threw himself at full length amongst the stones, and fell fast asleep.

How long he slept is unknown, but it is supposed

voices awoke him ; and peering over, he saw a man and woman on the terrace below. The former's back being towards him, the boy was hidden from his view by a great coat this person wore ; but the female on her knees he instantly knew as the wife of his benefactor, and suspecting she was being injured, he jumped up, shaking his fist. At that instant throwing out his right arm, the man turned his head ; and in the same moment Larry recognised his assailant of the day before, and darling lost Johnny.

Drawing back a pace, the idiot with a bound flung himself from above full on his enemy, striking the child from his hand, at the same time that he knocked the man down, falling on him and clutching his throat with a hold of iron.

Sullivan, confounded at the attack, yet finding himself in peril, grasped his assailant with all his strength, and so they rolled and tumbled on this narrow terrace over a valley of death two hundred feet below ; whilst the only words audible were Larry's wild, unearthly " Me a hapeny, me a hapeny ! "

The eagle's nest was scaled, one of the birds killed, not a vestige of poor little Johnny ; no, not even a shred of his dress, or a lock of his bright hair, to be treasured by the heartbroken mother. The only trace of the child had been where his hat lay, and thither the miserable father again turned his steps. He examined and re-examined around, now upwards, now downwards, until he arrived almost at the very spot where Larry had taken his sleep. Just as the terrace below met his view, he saw a dark mass sway for an instant, and then roll over the ledge, seemingly into the chasm, whilst a hand grasped at some

stunted bushes above. It was a human being, who might be saved ; and Parle bounded like a deer down the path, followed by his men. At that moment rang out, from below, “ Me a hapeny ! me a hapeny ! ”

“ My God, it’s the poor fool ! ” he cried ; “ we must save him.”

Gaining the edge, they looked over. At the full length of an arm hung two men ; one holding on to a few twigs within his gripe, which were straining and fracturing under the weight ; the other clinging to the former’s neck with both hands, his legs, like living serpents, twined around his body, and below a sheer fall of more than sixty yards.

Larry recognised them, as they gazed down, but the bright expression of the idiot’s countenance showed he little felt his position.

Parle, laying himself flat, and directing the men to hold his feet with all their strength, stretched out his hand ; but the other obstinately refused to unclasp himself from the object of that close embrace, yet thanked his friend by a look, which sent another pang to the kind fellow’s heart.

“ In the name iv Heaven, take it,” he said, again trying.

At his voice the other man looked upwards.

“ God iv marcy, it’s Murtah Sullivan ! ” cried Parle.
“ Help, boys, help ! ”

Yes ; there dangling over the gulf he hung, even already entering the gates of death and eternity. His hat fallen off ; his grizzled hair bristling in horror, the terrors of instant dissolution painted in dark hues upon his pallid cheeks—there he hung. “ Help ! ” he cried ; but as he spoke the twigs stretched lower and lower ; the roots

bent, crackled, broke—first one, then another, then all ; and away down they went over and over against stones, and trees, and boughs, but still fast clutched together. As the affrighted beholders drew back, the words “ Me a hapeny ! me a hapeny ! ” floating upwards thrilled their very hearts. Turning, Norah and the child lay before them close to the rock, she yet insensible, and the little fellow nestled on her bosom. Martin Parle read all at a glance.

Tenderly and gently the poor woman was borne home, but it took months of kind care and nursing before she recovered the shocks of that terrible day, if, indeed, she ever did.

To Johnny, like most children, it quickly became as a dream ; but when his mother at times drew him closer to her, as if assuring herself of his safety, he would whisper —“ Don’t be thinkin’, mammy, iv that bad black man.”

The remains of the two men were found terribly mangled, but still entwined. They were buried in separate graves ; and over one a headstone was raised, to the memory of “ Poor Larry,” by the grateful family who could only requite the sacrifice of his life by prayers for his soul.





THE BLACK CHANNEL

OF

CLOUGHNAGAWN.

CHAPTER I.

NOTHING can be conceived more wild than portions of the far west coast of Ireland when approached from the sea. Hoary rocks resembling small mountains spring up within a few hundred yards of that iron-bound barrier which has for ages repelled the enormous surges hurled against it from across the Western Ocean. Indeed little stretch of imagination is required to fancy oneself nearing some region never before trodden by human foot, where nothing meets the eye but heather and stone, resting on a base of foaming surf, where the sea-bird screams and flaps, and above which the eagle wheels in graceful circles.

Between this barrier—which rises probably to a hundred feet in height—and the base of the mountain, there is frequently a space of flat land, if so that may be called

which is in reality a collection of isolated boulders thickly scattered over a substratum of granite. What may be beyond the mountains it is not easy to say ; but their sides show nothing but gray stone with dark hollows between. These dark hollows sometimes appear as patches of vegetation, often exceeding in verdure anything attainable out of the tropics, and in which a light smoke curling upwards may perhaps afford the first indication of man's presence.

The stony flat we have spoken of is not unusually pierced by deep channels caused by the continued action of the Atlantic waves, such as that of Cloughnagawn—a long, narrow strip of land stretching between the sea and the foot of the mountains, and traversed through its entire length, some six miles, by one of the channels we have alluded to, and which, either from the entrances being so confined as to escape observation, or from the dark colour of the rocks, is usually known as the Black Channel of Cloughnagawn.

Although the openings to this channel are extremely small, and pierced straight in, yet, possibly owing to a softer vein, its course changes after a distance of some sixty feet ; and not only does the passage wheel until it runs north and south, but it widens very considerably, particularly towards the southern entrance, where it forms a sort of bay, in which a small craft can lie in perfect safety ; the full force of any wave being broken by a large rock standing mid-water, parting the impetus on each side, and rendering the space behind smooth and tranquil.

Opposite this rock, and nearly in the centre of the bay, dwelt Shawn or John Heffernan, and his adopted daughter,

Aileen. John pursued the calling of a fisherman ; but although his boat usually swung very innocently at her moorings when not employed in his reputed business, yet the authorities, although no one could say exactly how the suspicion had arisen, attributed to him another avocation, and one not of so law-respecting a character as that of a mere taker of fish.

Heffernan was a widower, who, never having had a living child of his own, always considered the circumstance which had thrown little Aileen in his way as a sort of miraculous compensation for what had been denied him in the ordinary manner. Thus it occurred. When about forty years of age, he returned home early one day, for his wife, who was near her confinement, had been somewhat ill that morning. On reaching his cottage he was ordered, in the peremptory tone assumed by female friends on such occasions, “to be off at won’t for the docthor ; he’d betther not let grass grow under his feet, and not come back for his life without him.” With this intimation, and the door being slammed rather than shut on him, Heffernan started off at the top of his speed across the mountains for Doctor Small.

It was about three o’clock on a winter’s day, with every appearance of a snow-storm ; but Doctor Small was not a man to be stopped by weather, as Heffernan well knew. His way lay close by the mountain chapel where he had been christened and married—circumstances which seemed to give him a sort of vested interest in the place. And so, as he passed, he bethought him of saying a little prayer, that “it might be a boy God would send.”

“Shure,” he muttered, “there aint no betther place

nor this, barrin' inside, an' begorra I darn't go there now with the hurry."

So he prayed for a son, according to the desire of persons of his class ; but his prayer was answered from heaven in utterances which sounded somewhat like "Augh, augh."

In the excitement of the moment, he surely believed it was "No, no ;" but looking up, what was there but a great raven wheeling in the air ?

"You unlucky black thief," he said, shaking his fist at the raven, "you would if you could, divil a doubt of it, but I crosses it, and puts it on the big stone beyant, so now do your best."

It may be necessary to inform our readers that when a curse, or bad wish, is "put on" an Irish peasant, the most approved mode of evasion is to "cross it," and "lay it on" something else. Thus Heffernan believing the raven was foreboding evil to him, "crossed it" and "laid it on" the big stone, without stopping on his way.

Afterwards things went pretty well with him, but just before reaching the end of his journey he saw a magpie on a bush.

"There 'tis again," he said to himself, well knowing what one magpie meant ; but as the bird held its peace, so did he, only thinking, "Divil a one of the docthor will be there for me, and what 'll I do then at all, at all?"

He was wrong, however, as he soon found out upon reaching the doctor's house ; for there sat the man of physic on a chair, his legs entwined among the rails.

"I tell you, I tell you," the doctor was saying (he had

a habit of repeating himself) to a person seated opposite to him, “I tell you what it is. It’s nonsense, and you’re an ass, an ass ; neither Quirk nor anyone else could take a man’s eye out, wash it, and put it in again. You’re an ass, Sir, to credit it,—an ass,—yes, an a-s-s !”

“Why, blur an’ ages, docthor,” replied the man thus addressed, “shure you don’t know betther nor Tim himself, an he’s the boy could insinse you into it, barrin’ he’s dead.”

“That’s always the way,” said Small, striking his legs up and down in a rage. “Always the way with your wonderful cures. Where’s the man? Show him to me, I ask. Oh, indeed, he’s dead ! it’s always *that* with you, Sir—always *that*. But I won’t led him be dead—he shan’t get off that way ; do you hear that, Sir,—do you hear that ! No, Sir, I’ll have him up for the lie.—Come in !” he suddenly exclaimed, hearing some one at the door.

The kitchen being dark, necessarily required light, which was supplied by a meagre candle stuck in the neck of a bottle. Heffernan’s precipitate entry, after the conversation which had preceded the doctor’s summons, threw the inmates into a little confusion. Two women sitting in the chimney-corner screeched ; a good-looking girl who had been arranging the “dhresser,” made a spring at “master” for protection : but whether from love—for he was a bachelor (an’ no onc knows what’s afore ’em), or from fear,—she clutched him so vigorously, that chair, doctor, table, candle and good-looking girl came down in one utter débris, while the fisherman slapped his hand on his thigh, and exclaimed,—

"Begorra, the docthor's kilt ! Bad cess to you for a magpie, I knowed you'd do it anyhow."

"Aw, aw, aw—Tim's ghost ! Tim's ghost ! Keep him from me, masther darlint," shrieked the girl.

"Who the devil—who the devil are you?" demanded the half-suffocated doctor. "Take her off me, will you, or she'll make a ghost of *me*?"

"Shure I'll do that same if I can find her," said Heffernan, feeling all about him ; but the moment his hand lighted on her, she set up renewed shrieks of "The ghost ! the ghost !" at the same time clinging to the doctor with an energy which had nearly overpowered him.

"I aint no ghost at all," asserted the messenger, endeavouring to pull her up. "I aint no ghost. Waw, blurry wars, don't kick a boy's shins that way, an' he only Heffernan of Cloughnagawn, with the wife took bad in the groanin,' an' I histed off at wond'rt for 'hissel'* without delay."

"Oh, Heffernan, Heffernan," said the prostrate doctor—who had private reasons of his own for a friendship with him, "it's you, is it? Shusy, girl, will you take your heavy anatomy of bones off my sternum and let me up?"

"Hiff! hiff!" retorted the damsels, rising in high dudgeon at such words being applied to her. "Hiff! then you needn't use them bad names agin a dasint girl, nor her bones neither, that aint no worse nor another's, I supposes."

Puff, puff, she went on, piling up more turf, and light-

* A polite emphasis for the "doctor," as if he were "*himself*" *par excellence*.

ing it with a handful of straw from the settlebed. There was soon a blaze, and the candle having been found and relighted, one of the women declared that "no mischief was done, barrin' the chair was bruck, and only fit to throw away."

But Small said "no," and sneeringly directed the man he had been arguing with about cures "to take it to his friend Quirk for advice."

He then ordered Paddy the pony to be brought to the door, and having filled the pockets of his large frieze-coat with necessaries, informed the fisherman that he would overtake him on his way home. Heffernan departed, after having been privately informed by Susy, as that damsel opened the door for him, that she would "know in the mornin', plase God, what the masther meant be spakin' thim hard things to her."

James Small, M.D., L.R.C.S.I., had, like many another man, commenced life with high hopes, and had studied his profession well. He had passed a first-rate examination, and being gazetted as a duly qualified medical practitioner, had put a brass plate on the door of his lodgings and looked out for practice; but whether the times were particularly healthy, or the big fish devoured the little ones, certain it is that his means gradually dwindled until they became quite in keeping with his name, small indeed. As a last resort he turned his attention to pauper cases, hoping that they might obtain for him some practice; but although the poor people duly collected every morning on the door-steps until they formed quite a little crowd, and although at times a man might be seen rushing in hot haste for the doctor—who would leave in such a

hurry that he uniformly put his hat on in the street—in spite of all this, it somehow became known that he was not earning a sixpence. Therefore it was that his landlady one day informed him “as how she couldn’t have the steps littered with all his nasty people, and that Mrs. Timpkins—(her husband worked at Jones’s of Bachelor’s Walk, him as made all the dresses for the grand officers)—Mrs. Timpkins was afraid of her baby getting fever or small-pox or something off the door or the railings when she was tuck out for an airing. And Mrs. Timpkins paid regular to the tick,” the landlady added, looking hard at Small: so we may suppose that *he* was not quite so punctual.

Thus nearly beaten in life’s struggle, he chanced one day to drop into a reading-room, where he saw an advertisement in the *General Advertiser* informing the public ‘that a highly educated medical practitioner, an L.R.C.S.I. accoucheur, &c., was required by the Board of Guardians of the Union of Ballynoughnahorrigan, for the district of Garrylaggin, including Cloughnagawn, whose services would be recompensed by a salary of fifty pounds a year, the successful candidate finding himself in everything.’ It was poverty, nearly starvation; but to remain as he was would be that, with debt, perhaps a prison besides: so he spent some of his last shillings in taking himself to the presence of the “enlightened guardians;” who having examined his certificates, which were certainly sufficient to have obtained for him any of the first medical appointments in the world, conferred upon this highly educated gentleman emoluments a little less in value than the incomings of a respectable mason. Nor had he a

“walk-over” either ; for a drunken and half-crazed party also found many admirers—who seemed to consider his disreputable character a proof of talent, and asserted that he had not his match in the world : which was perhaps true. A leading guardian, however, had declared for Small as the right man, “if they must have one ; though for his part he didn’t see the use, as he’d back his ould mother against the kit of ‘em.” Thus Small got the appointment, and took up his abode in the little village of Garrylaggin, where after a time he succeeded in obtaining a cottage with a few acres of land. But he soon became convinced that his previous education was now of little value to him.

At first he went to work *con amore*, but found that his patients rarely afforded him any information as to how his advice and prescriptions acted. He afterwards adopted the system of making them deposit some little article as a pledge for their reappearance, in order that he might judge for himself.

But the inconveniences of this system soon led to its relinquishment.

Then when typhus fever broke out, he attacked it in the most approved fashion ; but his patients continued to die, when according to all rule they should have lived. This caused great murmuring and much talk as to what his red-faced antagonist could have done, and “Brave, ‘twasn’t dyin’ they war wid Wilcox beyant.”

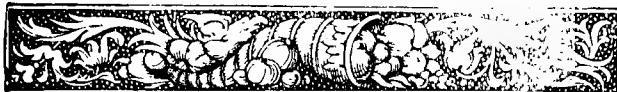
Nevertheless he still clung to the regulated practice, until that evening when he met the six funerals within half a mile of Garrylaggin—all his own patients. This terrible event, deepened as it was by the screaming of at

least sixty of the loudest “keeners”* in the district, caused him so much anxiety that he never closed his eyes that night, and early the next morning he rode off to consult with his friend Dr. Wilcox.

But his friend merely recommended a treatment of whisky and Epsom salts ; and indeed these remedies Dr. Small found in subsequent practice to take kindlier to the constitutions of his patients than those he had hitherto employed.

Thus, with one thing and another his faith in the pharmacopeia, and most things he had devoted his youth to acquire, decreased ; whilst rarely meeting educated men like himself, his conversation and bearing involuntarily assimilated themselves to his every-day associates, until blister and black draught formed his general practice, and there was really little apparent difference between himself and the ambitious Susy. Such was the result of high hopes and great expectations ; but he was a good-hearted fellow for all that, perhaps a trifle given to brandy-and-water, but ever ready as now to face the winter’s blast in the discharge of his duty.

* Persons hired to howl at Irish funerals.



CHAPTER II.

AS John Heffernan toiled homewards through the falling snow, he passed the little bush where he had seen the magpie, and which was now vacant.

“ You thried hard,” he said, “ an’ the devil a much you done afther all,” alluding to the part the magpie was supposed to have played in connection with the doctor’s upset.

Then he gained the chapel, and saw the big stone on which he had laid the raven’s bad wishes at some distance, standing where the high-road and short cut met, and where he expected the doctor to overtake him.

“ I’m before him,” he thought, reaching it and about to pass on the near side. Just then out rang the Angelus bell from the edifice behind him. Greatly startled as the first toll swept past, he commenced praying in a nervous way, when suddenly from the other side of the rock a deep groan struck his ear. He stopped short, his hair bristling on end.

“ I’m done for,” he muttered with trembling lips. “ It’s on it, shure enough, an’ I so mighty convanient—I’m done for now anyhow.”

"Is that the Angelus, Ellen?" he heard some one say: "we may be near help."

The reply was in a child's voice; then the first speaker went on—

"Try can you see anyone? this cold kills me—kills me. Yet if you were safe why should I wish to live? for William, husband, in this world we shall never meet more. Pray for me, Ellen, and for your poor father, William Whitmarsh, so cruelly torn from us. Never, my child, forget it."

"Mother, mother!" interrupted the girl, "I see some black thing moving; it's the bear we read of."

"No, no, my darling; put your trust in God. He can protect you and He will."

By this time, Heffernan had half decided that they were human beings; and peeping cautiously round the stone, he saw a woman stretched on the snow, apparently dying, and a little girl about five years old, standing by her side, and peering out apparently at some object. Her sweet innocent face, down which the long fair hair hung to her shoulders, at once dispelled any remaining fear, and he ventured round on one side, just as Small rode up on the other.

"What's it—what's it, eh, eh?" asked the doctor.

"Bedad, docthor," replied John, "it's a phooka * meself thought it war, but it aint then, glory be to God! —only a dying woman an' child is in it, an' she spakin' mighty illigant intirely."

"A dying woman!" cried the physician, throwing himself from his pony in an instant.

* An Irish phantom.

"My poor thing, my poor thing ! What brought you in this terrible way?"

A low moan was the only reply.

"Oh dear, oh dear ! where is it at all ?" he muttered, fumbling in his coat-pockets. "Now, now, now, swallow a little of this"—forcing a small quantity of wine down her throat. Soon the effect became apparent. She opened her eyes, and feebly whispered,—

"'Twas Heaven sent you to save us ; dying far from help."

"No, no," said the doctor in a determined way. "No, no, we'll have no dying now. Here, raise her a little, and slip this over her"—divesting himself of his great-coat.

The poor creature soon felt the genial warmth, a flush suffusing her cheeks ; whilst the little girl drawing closer, laid her hand on the doctor's arm, and fixing on him her large eyes, said—

"Good man—good man!"

Their attention was thus attracted towards the child, as she stood there, with the pale beams of the now rising moon just lighting up her sweet countenance, and moist blue eyes fixed with looks of love and gratitude on her mother's kind assistants.

"Eh, eh, eh !" cried Small. "Come straight down from Paradise she is, I really do believe."

"'Twar just that very same war in my own head," said John.

"Could you sit on the pony—the pony ?" asked the doctor. "We'll hold you, and this man's house is not far off,"

"I'll try," replied the woman. "'Twas God brought you here."

Together they lifted her up, and walking one on each side, supported her, whilst Ellen, obedient to directions, led the animal along the path towards the fisherman's house.

Mrs. Heffernan had, some time previous to their arrival, given birth to a child—a son, too, but dead. And this misfortune her female friends, by some process of reasoning peculiar to themselves, now attributed to her husband's having brought "the world's mother of people with him, instead of creeping in like a mouse, as won would that knowed the differ."

Nor did he gain anything by pointing out that the event had occurred long prior to his introduction of "this world's mother of people." The only reply vouchsafed to him being something which he couldn't rightly hear, about "min," and a charitable prayer, which they took good care he should hear, that "God would sind him some sinse in time."

However, leaving them to think as they pleased, Heffernan, in his own mind, set the entire affair down to the raven's account, muttering that "he got the better of me in it, afther all." But when Small pronounced the patient to be doing well, he became easy on his wife's account—who, towards morning, fell into a comfortable sleep.

Not so fared the poor stranger, who grew each hour weaker and weaker, until it became evident to all that her death was rapidly approaching.

Fully aware of it herself, she expressed much anxiety

to tell her story, in order that it might be known who her child was.

Her father, she said, had been a respectable tradesman in the ship-chandling business. He was now dead, but when alive he resided in a distant part of the country, where there was a seaport. His two assistants, William Whitmarsh and Philip Malloy, were great friends. The former, an open-hearted fellow, who at one time had been very wild, in a thoughtless moment confided to the other the fact of his having once, for a scampish freak, entered under a feigned name on board a man-of-war, from which he afterwards took French leave, swimming ashore at night, and leaving his clothes behind him. At the time, Malloy only laughed, making a good joke of the dilemma his friend must have found himself in on touching terra firma. But when their employer's daughter Ellen grew up into a fine young woman, with whom both men fell deeply in love, and she showed an unmistakable preference for Whitmarsh, the foolish trust the latter had placed in his rival troubled him not a little, even although he could not bring himself to think that he would take advantage of it. At first, her father had been opposed to this attachment, but his love for her overcame his objections, and they were married. Shortly afterwards a friend informed the young bridegroom that Malloy had been heard to say—"As he knew Whitmarsh had once been in the navy, he supposed he could show his discharge."

On this a family consultation was held, and it was decided that Whitmarsh and his wife should go to a far-off town, where they were unknown, and which being on the

coast, would enable him to pursue the same line of business that he had hitherto been accustomed to. Here they dwelt for some years, until they were beginning to be looked on as quite old inhabitants, when one evening the husband rushed home in great agitation.

"I met him face to face in the street," he said; "his savage hatred is unallayed; for though he pretended not to see me I know he did, and marked him afterwards in close conversation with one of the cruiser's men. We must fly, love, and at once."

That night, after collecting all their money, Whitmarsh, his wife and child, fled, and having for a week traversed the country, finally established themselves in a fisherman's house about six miles from where Heffernan first encountered the dying woman. Their preference for the district of Cloughnagawn they accounted for by alleging the necessity of sea air for their little girl; whilst in reality their choice was influenced by the belief that it was the least likely place in the world for naval authorities, or the placards they were distributing, to enter with the inhabitants' goodwill.

For some time their host (Moynahan) treated them with the greatest civility, their little weekly rent being no doubt an object to him; but having occasion to attend a fair at a town some distance off, on his return both were struck by his altered manner. There was a dark scowl on his face, and a look of gloomy preoccupation about him, which roused Whitmarsh's suspicions, so much so that he informed Moynahan that he would leave the next day but one, when their week terminated. At the time the man made no remark; but Whitmarsh observed that

he kept a close watch on his movements : so in order to guard against chances, he resolved to anticipate the time he had named, and go away suddenly next morning.

That night, however, the door was assailed with violent blows, and orders loudly given to open it. As Moynahan's hand was on the bolt, his lodger, explaining that he was a deserter, begged hard for a little delay, that he might escape through the back window. But the fisherman pleaded fear, and drawing back the bolt, admitted an armed band sent to arrest "Tom Marsh, a deserter." Seizing a stool, the infuriated man made a desperate resistance, until some one ran a sword through his left shoulder, after which he was borne down and dragged away. But though bruised and bleeding, he yet vehemently vowed revenge against his treacherous host, whom he swore never to forgive.

The wretched wife spent that night in a half-frenzied state ; but reason returning, the next morning she departed for the little village of Garrylaggin across the mountains. But she mistook the road through the falling snow, and when darkness had come she had not yet reached her destination. Then her strength gave way, and she lay down behind the rock, where she was first introduced to our readers.

"And now," said the dying woman, "my tale of sorrow is ended, as soon will be my short life ; it is God's will, I know, and I bow to it. But ah, my darling, my darling !" she continued, kissing (and fondling the little girl, "it's nothing but a cold cold world is before you when I am gone !")

"It shan't, it shan't !" cried Heffernan, deeply moved.

"It shan't be cowld, if I can help it. The place aint much to brag of, but such as it is, her smile will be as welcome in it as the flowers of May, an' we widout chick or child, too. Thrust her to me, an' the world shan't be cowld to her, if I can help it."

Soothed by these kind promises, the poor mother's last moments were calm and tranquil, and she resigned her weary spirit with a smile into the hands of her Creator.

Thus Heffernan having undertaken the guardianship of the child, determined to perform his promise honestly, and on consultation with the doctor, resolved that her education (the first seeds of which had evidently been sown) should be continued. For this purpose she was sent to a female friend of Small's who lived in C—, through whose means little Aileen was provided with an education, which, to Heffernan's great delight, elevated her in the eyes of the neighbours almost to the rank of a lady.

So many years passed, until from a sweet child she had grown into a lovely girl of seventeen. But now we must leave her and Cloughnagawn for a far different scene.





CHAPTER III.

ABOUT ten miles to the westward of Cape Palmas on the African coast, a small vessel lay becalmed under the intensely burning sun of that region. She was covered with canvas from truck to deck, except abaft, where her fore and aft mainsail being triced up, a temporary awning afforded some slight protection. At the heel of the bowsprit, too, in her extreme bow, a spare tarpaulin had been loosely thrown across, and under it sat two men. Far as the eye could view seawards, all was fiercely blazing heat. The very atmosphere seemed to scintillate with particles of fiery air, and the ocean's surface having assumed that oily, semi-fluid state where creatures half slime, half animal life, drag and crawl, could only be gazed on with feelings of intense disgust.

Landward, the prospect was better: even at that distance, the glorious tropical vegetation was visible; and clumps of palms and cocoa-nuts, and a thousand other umbrageous trees, bringing before the mind a relief of shade beneath their never-ending varieties of green, caused a feeling of momentary delight, until recollections of the deadly malaria concealed amidst their beauties drew forth a sigh at a charnel-house being thus adorned.

For three days had she so lain, the inshore flaws and puffs, often seen and longed for, dying away before they reached her in that tremendous heat. She was a small vessel, very small indeed for the character she bore—that of a man-of-war; but small as she was, there hung from her peak the flag which carries freedom to the enslaved African, and her deck was trodden by British seamen, able and willing to enforce it.

H. M.'s brig *Brisk* it was, under the command of Lieutenant Kellet, R.M., and charged with despatches to the admiral then cruising somewhere between St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope.

Lieutenant Kellet was himself under the awning abaft, in conversation with his first officer, Mr. Long, a passed midshipman.

"We must keep the men as cool as possible," he was saying, "or we shall have sickness on board, if this holds."

"The doctor's list is clear enough now, Sir," replied Mr. Long. "Marsh was the only one he feared for, and he's out again; there he is in the bows."

"I'm glad of it," remarked the commander; "he'd be a great loss, for he's a good man, and a steady one too; no one would think by him now that he once had an R to his name, and nearly killed half the party sent to arrest him."

"I believe it's true though, Sir," said Long, "for I had it from Williams, of the *Vestal*, who saw him brought on board; he told me he was outrageous against some fellow on shore who betrayed him, and swore, if it was in fifty years, he'd have revenge; and I think he's like to

keep his word, too, if he gets a chance, for he's the most determined fellow I ever met. They said his wife was a beauty, and nearly died when he was carried off. One of the party told Williams 'twas a terrible thing to witness ; the worst job, he said, he ever was on, and that he'd have given a month's grog to have been out of it."

"Duty of the kind is never very agreeable," observed Kellet, with a yawn. "This infernal heat puts one half asleep ; I'll get a stretch below under the after windows ; there's some little air there. Keep the men in cover, and have a sharp look-out ; something inshore makes me think we'll have it stiff before long. If we were once round the Cape, we'd likely have a puff out of the Gulf."

"I wish we had, Sir," laughed the junior officer, "and a good fat slaver standing out before it."

"By-the-way," asked the senior, stopping on the steps. "By-the-way, didn't they say the *Bonito* was for some river down there ?"

"Ay, ay, Sir ; but it's palm oil and ivory he's on."

"I've *my* doubts," answered the other, descending, "and only wish we'd a chance of overhauling his oil and ivory."

Where the two sailors lay forward, a conversation was also going on.

"I seen them, myself, I tell you," said one to another. "An' a horrid sight it was, too. 'Twouldn't have been so much if 'twas a man ; but when a fellow with any heart sees female women tore that way, there's a great differ in it."

Marsh—for it was he—shuddered.

"And the child?" he demanded.

"Just the same," replied the narrator. "They were buried together."

"You tell me," questioned the former, "you tell me they were turned out in the snow, and not one in the place would lend a hand to save them?"

"So 'twas reported; anyhow, if they'd been took in, of course they couldn't be found where they was."

"May God's curse—" exclaimed Marsh; but there he stopped, as his companion eyed him with astonishment.

"You seem to take it heavy," he remarked.

"So would anyone with a human breast. And the people about could have helped them, couldn't they?"

"Well, to be sure they could; why not?" answered Hogan. "Only, maybe it's timersome they was of their seeing things, an' they living by it."

"Ah! by smuggling?"

The other nodded.

"But the coast all about is as bare as my hand; how can any vessel approach and land without being seen?"

"You know little about it," said his comrade. "If you think it's that way it's done, it aint; but they meet her fur out, where no one thinks of, and carry boat-loads of things up that place they call the Black Channel."

"Why didn't you of the Water Guard catch them?"

"It's easy for you to talk," broke in the man with anger. "Mighty easy; I'd like to see you do it. We watched and watched, and you might as soon catch a leprehaun. One night, I could take my oath this minute, I seen her going in, and an hour after we sent the gig with a couple of hands to look after them; but not a

single blessed thing was there in the whole channel, though they rowed backwards and forwards : till, all of a sudden, down came a shower of stones, that almost knocked the bottom out, and glad enough they were to get away. Next morning we tried again. Everything went civil and quiet in the daytime, but not a boat was to be seen ; so after that we kept guard, and nothing went in or out, because it couldn't, unknown to us ; and yet, when the light broke, as true as I'm lying here, before our eyes was John Heffernan's hooker, as snug as if she'd never left it."

"And what do you make of that?" asked the listener, with evident curiosity.

"How can I tell?" replied Hogan.

"She must have been hidden somewhere," suggested Marsh. "Why didn't you search?"

"Search!" he cried ; "'twould take five hundred men to search them places, and not find it after all."

"But why not seize John what's-his-name's boat, when you did see her?" demanded the other.

"'Cause we couldn't ; there wasn't as much aboard her as you'd put in your eye. No, they'll have to *buy* one of themselves yet, and they'll find one too."

"I should think they would," assented Marsh.

At this point a hurried order from the officer on deck made both men spring to their feet.

"Aft here, lads ; get this awning down. Now it comes," said Long. "Hot and hot. In top-gallant-sails—in stunsails—down with them—get this main sheet aft—keep her a good sou'-south-east, Mr. Parker. You Foot," he added to a junior officer—" run down and tell the

skipper we've a whole capful of it now from the nor'ard and eastward, and likely for more."

Whilst the young man was descending, the cry of "Sail ho!" came from the look-out.

"Where away?" demanded Long.

"Right on our larboard bow, Sir; just opening the Cape."

"Mr. Foot," called Long, down after his messenger,— "Mr. Foot, tell the commander." But that officer was already ascending, having heard the exciting cry of "a sail."

Under ordinary circumstances this might mean anything or nothing; but on the coast of Africa it frequently means freedom to hundreds of our enslaved fellow-creatures, and prize money to those who well deserve it."

"Where is she?" asked Kellet the moment he gained the deck.

"There, Sir."

"All right," he said, quickly shutting up the glass. "Lower that ensign at once; down with it; he hasn't seen it yet, we're too end on. Mr. Long, get all flat aft, and luff, luff, right in. If he took us for what we are, he'd run back again and land his niggers, supposing they're on board; we must let him well outside. When he opens us to leeward, these false buttings in our foresail, and the way we've painted her, may make him take us for an easy-going trader; don't have the yards too nicely braced, men, let a few ropes dangle about, and only three or four of you show yourselves."

"Shan't we hoist any colours, Sir?"

"Not until we tell him what we really are," was the reply.



CHAPTER IV.

HE schooner *Bonito* from New Orleans to the Coast for palm-oil and ivory had been some time before at Sierra Leone, where she lay close to the *Brisk*. Her sharp build and rakish appearance at first excited observation, but as nothing connected with the slave trade could be proved against her she remained unmolested. Indeed her polite little captain, Monsieur Martel, a half-Frenchman, tended greatly to disarm suspicion, it being considered impossible that one could be engaged in so rough a business who seemed incapable of even controlling the crew he sailed with ; his always mildly spoken orders being generally listened to with a half sneer, and obeyed, apparently, more from sufferance than otherwise. One man of almost gigantic size, who called himself Sebastian, although keeping usually aloof and never interfering with his arrangements, was nevertheless frequently observed regarding him with the sort of quiet chuckle with which a nurse-maid permits herself to be tyrannised over by a child.

Completing her supply of water, &c., the *Bonito* started for the Gold Coast at the entrance of the Bight of Benin to which she was bound, and having reached and entered

one of the rivers in its vicinity, within twenty-four hours a total metamorphosis had taken place in her interior. From below, in the bottom of the hold under the ballast, slave fittings were drawn forth, with all the requisites for a cargo of Africans awaiting on shore, penned up like sheep.

Monsieur Martel, too, although chief owner of the vessel in which from curiosity he had taken a trip, had been reduced to his real position, that of *butt* and *laughing-stock* to the crew, and the more congenial Sebastian installed in his place. And then four hundred and fifty unfortunates were placed on board, packed as close as ingenuity could devise, without regard to anything except stowing the greatest possible number in the smallest possible space. On the hard boards they lay, naked and bound, while the schooner sailed with the land breeze for Cuba, her real destination.

Running along to the westward, Cape Palmas being close at hand, there fell a calm so deep, that with the blazing sun above and the suffocating steam below, that hell between decks becomes indescribable. Hitherto the negroes had died by fives and sixes, now they went by scores and fifties. For two days the calm had continued, in spite of curses and imprecations. The third morning dawned fiery hot, and when this cargo of human misery was inspected eighty more had shuffled off their wretched existence, and gone to demand vengeance before the Creator's throne. Dead or dying, they were savagely *whipped** on deck; and although some might yet have life in them, so soon as it was ascertained that they were

* A mode of hoisting from below on board ship, by means of a rope or block.

beyond saving, and consequently worthless, they too were flung overboard. Around that floating pandemonium the sea was literally alive with sharks : the snap of their horrid jaws could be distinctly heard as they crunched through flesh and bone, and the water foamed white as the monsters switched their long bodies to and fro, trying to wrench muscle and joint asunder. But for them, however, the accumulated mass of putrefaction must at once have blasted with death in its most loathsome form every human being within its influence, and the victims themselves avenged their own wrongs. Of four hundred and fifty wretched beings embarked less than a week before, only two hundred now remained : but the price being high, the venture was likely to pay well ; a breeze springing up from the northward and eastward would reduce the mortality, especially since the dead had made room for the living. So along the land flew this ark of misery and crime.

“Now if the darned Britishers will only keep their cussed noses out of it !” growled Sebastian, with an accent which proved him a mongrel Briton in spite of his name.

“*Ma foi*,” said Martel, “*que peut on faire ? Nous avons laissé si bon caractère à Sierra Leone. Moi, j’étais si aimable ; ha, ha !*”

“Blow you, speak English, can’t you ?” cried the captain savagely, at the same time dropping a heavy marline-spike on the Frenchman’s toe.

“Ah, bah, diable !” he exclaimed, catching up his wounded foot in his hand, and hopping about. “Ah, why you do that, Sair ?”

The men laughed.

“Touch him up behind, Jack,” said one of them to a comrade who was cutting a quid of tobacco.

“By Gar,” screamed Martel, wheeling round on feeling the prick—“By Gar, you do it!”

Then looking at his hand, which he had applied to the spot, and seeing blood, “By Gar, you do it; vous m’avez blessé.” And rushing to where a cutlass lay against the mast, he seized it, and attacked the sailor with great fury, reiterating, “Vous m’avez blessé; ah, vous m’avez tiré du sang au derrière, au derrière, au derrière,” as he flew round and round, lunging at his antagonist, who had armed himself with a handspike.

Sabastian highly enjoyed this scene, and the crew assembled from all parts to witness the affray, which at length (amidst much laughter) appeared to be terminated by the Frenchman’s sword being sent flying out of his hand and overboard by a tremendous sweep of Jack’s bar. As the captain’s eye followed it, he perceived a small vessel standing for the land. She was some four or five miles ahead of him, and seemed desirous of fetching in at the back of the Cape which the *Bonito* had now well opened.

Instantly he went forward to reconnoitre, whilst the disarmed Martel, not yet satisfied, was looking for another weapon.

“By Gar,” he was excitedly asseverating, “I am not conquis; non, by Gar; vous m’avez tiré du sang au derrière, au derrière, au derrière. I am not conquis; no, by Gar.” And discovering a boarding-pike, he rushed to the encounter. “Ah ça,” he went on, making a thrust

at his adversary—when in a moment he found himself off his legs and in the grasp of the herculean Sebastian.

“ You infarnal fool,” cried the latter, “ if you don’t give it up, I’ll fling you overboard this minute. There’s lots of them black fins waiting for you—they’re hungry again,” he added, with a horrid chuckle.

“ What you for, Sair?” demanded the astonished prisoner, writhing about. “ Il m’a tiré du sang.”

“ Curse your sang,” answered the other, shaking him until his teeth chattered ; “ will you give it up, I say ? ”

“ Non. C’est mon propre vaisseau,” shouted the little man.

“ Yours ? ” sneered Sebastian, giving him another shake —“ yours ? whose will she be if that’s a Britisher ? ” pointing ahead.

All eyes were instantly turned that way. The stranger was holding the same course as when first seen, lying for the land, partly across the *Bonito’s* wake, and without taking the slightest notice of the schooner. Her canvas seemed patched in many places, and there was altogether a lubberly cut about her quite incompatible with the general appearance of a cruiser.

The Frenchman, become speedily pacified at the notion of such a visitation, was now all anxiety as to her character.

“ Mon Dieu ! ” he exclaimed, “ ce n’est pas possible ; le bon Providence ne le permettra jamais.”

“ The less you jaw about Providence here, the better,” growled the captain ; continuing, with an oath : “ If we are safe, cussed small thanks to you. She’s more like to be one of ourselves,” he added to those around.

"A-h-a!" said Martel, with a sigh of relief. Then, seeming to recollect himself, he inquired: "Mais si c'était un de ces bêtes Anglais, que ferions nous—fight? ah, ah!"

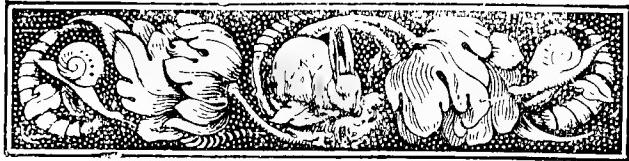
"Fight the devil," roared Sebastian; "much you'd get by it. No; run back and land the niggers, if we couldn't show our heels. At the worst, I'd leave her for them with a match in the magazine; 'twouldn't be bad fun to see them all in the air together."

"Eh quoi," muttered the owner, as if thinking aloud—"eh quoi, faire sauter mon vaisseau? Non; I will not it allow."

Whatever reply he might have received was arrested by the movements of the inshore vessel, which at that moment traversing their track astern, turned southward, as if clearing the cape.

"She's for the Gulf after all," observed one of the men.

But more and more her bow pointed seaward, until bringing the wind over her starboard quarter, she shifted tacks and sheets, and then luffing sharply up, steadied herself on a course crossing to windward that of the *Bonito*—which was now running nor'-west and by west.



CHAPTER V

HE manœuvre narrated in our last chapter caused so much excitement on board the schooner, that it was evident strong doubts existed in the minds of her crew as to the stranger's character and intentions. Although nothing about her would seem to warrant suspicion, still this sudden alteration in her course seemed so inexplicable, that Sebastian never took the glass from his eye for fully five minutes.

"She's not like one as I ever saw," he said relinquishing his gaze. "Black, and all black, sails pieced, ropes flying about like mare's tails, and only a few hands. She's no bunting, though," he continued, again viewing her—"she's no bunting. Show him our stars and stripes : see what he'll make of that."

Hitherto neither vessel had displayed colours. Now the American flag floated over the *Bonito*, but the sharpest watchfulness failed to detect the slightest attempt at anything like a corresponding reply to this challenge on board the other, who held her rapid way without apparently noticing the act. For an hour things continued so, the sternmost vessel by the crossing course she lay rather

gaining ground on the American, but abstaining from in any way declaring her nationality. Again the telescope was resorted to ; but the slaver's people obtained little more insight from it ; for as before only four or five hands could be seen, while the deck seemed littered with bags and old sails, not a gun visible, and loose ropes flying about in all directions.

To consider themselves chased would have been absurd : nothing about the stranger's appearance could for a moment justify such a thought ; but still there was something so singular in the affair, that, taken in conjunction with her being fully his match in sailing qualities, induced Sebastian, who was an old hand, to alter his course, run back round the cape, and then, if pursued, ascend one of the rivers, land the negroes, and wait for a better chance.

"If we are forced in," he announced to the crew, "we'll top with more fellows, place of them went there"—pointing overboard. "So here's up helm, and see what he's at."

Away flew the schooner's head, her sails bellying as she pointed first west, then two points to the southward ; and round spun her yards, bringing the breeze over her larboard quarter. "Haul aft and belay !" and off she darted for the entrance of the Gulf with the wind abeam.

The moment sails were trimmed, every eye was fixed on the stranger, who by this change had been left on altogether another course. For perhaps fully ten minutes the suspicious craft pursued this course unaltered, but then, as though yielding before the blast, her canvas swelled to greater dimensions, her starboard bow came

into full view, and as she wore gracefully round on the same tack as the *Bonito*, a stream of fire was seen to issue from her forward port, whilst the boom of a gun sounded over the water as the ensign of Great Britain ascended to her peak and flung its defiant folds abroad.

"Death and furies!" shouted Sebastian, striking his heavy hand on the binnacle. "It's the brig lay near us—I know her well. Up with you, men, sluice water on the sails! Send it aloft in buckets—we *must* make the river now."

Having succeeded in getting the slaver well outside, Kellet, on altering his course, deeming further concealment unnecessary, gave the orders we have seen obeyed, and which announced his real character. In a moment, as by magic, every yard was braced and squared to the greatest nicety, and ropes and halliards which had been permitted to fly about were in their respective places. The drum beat, and through her open ports the crew might be perceived mustering at quarters.

"Mind not to hull him, men, when you fire," said the commander to those at the guns. "Aim at his spars. Hulling only destroys the negroes. We'll close him a little first, though. How's she running, Mr. Eastwood?"

"Eight knots, Sir," replied that officer, who had just hove the log.

"Don't you think we're overhauling him?" continued the other. "His paint looks plainer than it did to me."

"Yes, Sir," but he's working to cross us, observed Long. "He's for up the river, depend on it."

"Then, get all more aft. She'll not go so fast through the water, but he mustn't get inshore of us."

The boatswain's pipe sounded through the brig, as fifty men stamping aft strained the stout hemp like harp-strings, and the *Brisk* luffed up two points closer to the wind. But still the chase, her rig enabling her to lie somewhat nearer, instead of running on a parallel line, continued to hold one which in time would traverse the other's course ahead.

"Nor'-east and by east," said Kellet, looking at the compass. "She won't do better, if we're to keep way on her. As he stands now he must close us: we're going as fast through the water as he is. Try a shot from that starboard bow when she lifts. Knock away the coin, and see if you can pitch it amongst the rigging."

Bang! went the gun, all eyes watching the effect of its messenger.

"There it goes, Sir," said one of the men; "short a long way."

"Curse them for popguns!" angrily exclaimed the baffled commander.

"Piff! piff!" went Sebastian with a grimace of derision over the weather quarter of the *Bonito*, as he saw the shot plump into the water far to windward of him.

"Piff! keep the buckets going, men. If this breeze only holds," he muttered, "but I'm cussed feared it won't. W-h-e-w!" he whistled as the wind abated. "Get that stunsail-boom rigged," he went on; "I think she'll carry it now."

With an increase of canvas the schooner sprang forward, and in half-an-hour was drawing rapidly across her

pursuer, although at the same time lessening the actual distance between the vessels.

"If we can only get the weather-gage of him, he may sing for us," cried the slaver's captain. "Is that a fog," he continued, "rising on shore?"

"Looks very like it," replied the man addressed.

"Bang!" went another gun from the brig; this time, however, the missile whistled over them.

Sabastian threw his eye aloft—not a yarn was cut.

"'Twon't be for long," he grumbled,—"'twon't be for long if this holds. W-h-e-w! that's a fog coming off, and a tarnation one too, I guess. We'll run slick into it—here it is again!"

Whilst the last words were on his lips, the *Brisk* luffed broad up, and as her lee ports lifted the entire little broadside was discharged.

"Whirr! w-h-i-rr whirr!" went the masses of metal amongst spars and ropes; but still fortune favoured the *Bonito*, who held on unscathed.

Four times had her enemy executed this manœuvre without success, and the slaver profiting by the loss of speed required in its execution, was right ahead making dead for the land, having weathered on the cruiser.

The captain of the schooner stood abaft, triumphantly slapping her quarter with his hand, and nodding towards his discomfited adversary. The latter, apparently flinging up the chase, was now falling off to the southward; but at that moment jets of flame sprang from her weather side, and while one of his men fell on deck a corpse, and the schooner flew right into the wind, Sebastian was told by

the crash and tear of wood and canvas that his fore-top-mast had been shot away.

To ease sheets and run south was the work of a moment, whilst all hands hastened to cut adrift the useless wreck.

This misfortune, however, compelled them to keep a course across the Gulf, instead of gaining the river's friendly shelter: so spreading every stitch of sail their vessel could carry, the breeze so far favoured them by its lightness that they were better than able to hold their own with their opponent—who, heavier in the water, felt the loss of wind much more than did the less weighted chase.

Finding his guns useless on account of the increased distance, Kellet, having ordered them to be secured, contented himself with steadily following on the schooner's track. Evening was now drawing to a close, and as the sun was about to sink into his bed of fire, there arose above the distant coast a dense haze: in cloudy sheets of thick mist it rolled hither and thither, shrouding everything it swept over in one gray pall: seaward and more seaward it lapped, till at length the *Bonito* entered within its folds; first, her masts and sails appeared to those gazing from the brig, as if floating unsupported in mid air; then higher and higher crept the close embrace, until only portions of her loftiest canvas were visible: for a moment flickering they went and came, and then they vanished as in a vision. This was the fog Sebastian had foreseen; and it now came, wrapping in its mantle the pursuer equally with the pursued. As it closed round the war vessel,

bringing with it a feeling of intense cold, Kellet spoke a few words to his subordinate, to which the latter replied—

“I quite agree with you, Sir.”

“If I’m right,” continued the chief, “our boats must do the work ; depend on it, this fog will make the end of night dead calm. Have all ready : you’ll carry her easy with twenty men.”

“I only wish we’d the chance, Sir,” said Long.

“Make the people put on their blanket things. This sort of weather knocks fellows over at once. Were you ever on the coast before ?”

“No, it’s my first trip.”

“I’ve been here often. Nothing like warmth such a night as this. I’ll get mine on. See to yourself and the crew, and keep her as she is until I come up.”

“Here it thickens,” exclaimed Sebastian, as the sheet of heavy vapour swayed nearer and nearer. Then casting his eye upwards, a grim smile stole over his features as he saw the new spar all complete, in place of that which had been destroyed.

“Now,” he cried, as the cruiser was hidden to view—“now, haul up to the nor’ard and eastward again, close as wax ; we’ll shove her more into it. Heave round in an hour or so nor'-west, and hurrah for Cuba ! Better keep the land of him, fear of chances—a calm might come out of this almighty fog.”

Holding for some time this course, he demanded of the steersman, “How did he bear when you last saw him ?”

"About a point to the west of north," was the reply.

"Then we're well inside of him, even if he's not gone on a wild-goose chase after us to the southward. Round with her."

Down went the helm: turning her head, the schooner slipped along to the nor'-west, and even in that light air ran five knots an hour.





CHAPTER VI.

ALL things seemed to go well with the *Bonito*. By three o'clock, A.M., their yesterday's losses were fully recovered, and they were now flying towards their destination with a favourable breeze. As yet the fog enveloped them in its yellow-gray shroud which no eye could pierce; but to the eastward it had latterly become more and more luminous. Suddenly something seemed to pierce through from that quarter, forming a sort of halo. The sun had risen, and in another moment a sail flapped forward—succeeded by an instantaneous calm, so still, so dead, that a lighted candle might have been carried unextinguished from stem to stern,

Throughout the night the slaver's captain had never closed his eyes; and now haggard, unshorn, and with traces of every fierce passion stamped on his countenance, he walked the deck restlessly, alternately cursing the powerlessness of his vision and the providence which withdrew the wind. Then he stopped in breathless attention: for a sound had struck his ear, so slight indeed that by anyone less practised than him it would

have passed unnoticed. He listened: for a time there was no repetition of the sound, but that he had heard it he was convinced.

"'Twas an oar," he muttered, "an oar rolling on the thwart."

Again he listened, placing his hand to his ear.

"There!" he said. "By thunder, it is a boat! And this blasted calm—if it's the cursed Britisher now? But he'll never have her—never, by the great grandiferous republic! To tarnation tarnity with that French fool I'll send them all to immortal smash first, I will."

And diving below he soon reappeared, laying something unperceived along the top of the hatch—which he concealed beneath a tarpaulin used as a cover in bad weather. Then he resumed his former occupation of pacing backward and forward, now and then casting spiteful glances at the useless sails.

Whilst he was thus employed, there suddenly emerged from the sky over his head the appearance of high land, looking as though it were about to drop from its unsupported position and crush the devoted vessel.

By untrained eyes this might have been regarded as ominously mysterious, but to him it merely announced the dispersion of the fog: such a dangerous proximity of the coast he knew to be only an illusion, and that in reality it was some distance off. But it was with intense anxiety that he now watched the curtain slowly uprising before the blazing sun, cognizant as he was of the utter futility of any exertions he could make to evade danger, if such were concealed beneath it.

But as yet fortune seemed to favour him, for between

the schooner and the shore, in all the tract left visible by the uplifting fog, not a sail was to be seen. To seaward, however, the mist had not yet cleared off. Backward and backward it rolled, until half a mile—a mile was revealed, but no speck of sail was as yet seen on the smooth bosom of the water. Still backward until—

“Hell and lightnings!” roared Sebastian, in a way which roused his companions to a sense of impending danger—“Hell and lightnings! the brig’s run right slick with us through the night.” His coolness, however, quickly returned along with a sense of his real position.

“Stow all well in the boats, get them over on the starboard side, and no row—they’ll be here ‘nation soon without it. Put in grub and arms. Martel?”

“Ah, quoi?”

“Go below,” whispered the captain. “Lay your hands on the money, and stow it about you where it won’t be seen. With money and arms——” he muttered. “But off with you, they’ll be here like flash. Look!” he exclaimed, pointing to three boats which could now be seen pulling towards the *Bonito* with all their might, one of them fifty yards ahead of the others. The Frenchman rushed below, whilst Sebastian gazed on his advancing enemy with a diabolical look.

“Hurry through it!” he cried, addressing the men—who were passing various articles over the side.

In fact, Kellet, suspecting the plan likely to be adopted by the slaver when the dense atmosphere closed around them, had kept the *Brisk* two points to the northward of the course held by the other vessel

through the night ; and when the rising sun stilled the breeze, he was only a couple of miles outside his adversary — who, from having stood landward for some time previous to turning north-west, whilst the brig was steadily pursuing her way, had lost the advantage which running more off the wind might have given him. When the calm fell, the cruiser's boats were silently lowered, and lay alongside with their armed crews prepared for action ; and the schooner's upper spars becoming discernible to them a moment or so prior to her captain's being aware of their proximity, they had started at once, and were half way across the intervening space before the hull of their vessel had become visible to their opponent. Then as, dashing forward, they sprang into view, Sebastian had raised his warning shout of "Look!"

" We haven't time," he continued, as he told the crew to "hurry through with it."—" We haven't time to loose the niggers, or I'd do it, and put a few of these in their hands," shaking his cutlass. " They'd be into them critters like greased lightning — they would, cuss 'em. Off with you, Parks, keep the schooner between you and them, pull for shore, and wait for me just round the point. I've a little something to say to this headmost fellow 'fore *I* starts, so you rest hang on till it's done."

" What's to wait for ?" grumbled one of the men.

" Just 'cause I tell you," said Sebastian, clutching a pistol. " Over with you, and do as you're bid," he reiterated ; and then, lifting a heavy mass of metal, carried it across in the direction of the leading boat, which was now within thirty yards.

" Give way, men," called the officer in command of

the boat, and on she rushed, the water foaming under her bow.

“In of all,” he cried, as, sheering alongside, every oar lay inside at full length, whilst the men sprang to board.

But at that moment the heavy weight of metal descended from above, tearing through the sides and bottom of the boat ; and in an instant the crew were to be seen swimming for their lives.

One delighted glance Sebastian cast on them : but as the other boats were rapidly approaching, and as further delay might have risked what even their destruction could not compensate for, he drew back, and hastened to where the tarpaulin over the hatch concealed a long thin fuse leading below. Striking a light, he applied it to the end of the fuse, not desisting until the sputtering of the composition showed it was securely ignited. Then moving to the spot where he had directed his companions to wait for him, he was preparing to descend, when Martel, whom he believed to have left the schooner long before, emerged from below, where mischance or his fate had detained him unaccountably long. Seeing the ignited fuse, Martel rushed to extinguish it, exclaiming,—

“Ah, by Gar ! mais non !”

But merely uttering the words, “B——t you, you will have it, will you ?” Sebastian drew a pistol from his belt, and shot him dead. He then relighted the train, and took possession of a small bag which had hung under his victim’s coat.

Although all this occupied some little time, yet hither-

to he had not been interrupted, by reason of the boarders devoting their attention to the safety of their immersed companions. But as Sebastian possessed himself of the purse, a sailor bounded over the larboard quarter, and made at him cutlass in hand. It was Marsh ; he had rowed the bow oar, and when the boat was stove in, had contrived with much adroitness to clamber up the ship's side. He now assailed the captain—who defended himself with his cutlass whilst retreating across the deck, being unwilling to expend his remaining pistol unless as a last resort. Every moment, however, his look would wander towards where the smoking fuse was sinking out of sight below the hatch. Following his glance, Marsh divined his secret ; a minute might be too late, and the ignited part out of reach. Springing forward, he wrenched away the entire communication, at the instant that his left arm fell powerless by his side, shivered at the elbow by a pistol-shot.

Maddened with pain and rage, he again rushed on his antagonist, plying him with rapid blows ; but Sebastian, having reached the spot where he believed the schooner's boat was waiting for him, managed to drive back his adversary with a great sweep of his cutlass ; but just as he was jumping over the bulwark into the boat, he saw that it was a hundred yards off, rowed for very life to shore ! At the first shot his men had provided for their own safety. With curses on his lips, he turned in despair, resolving to sell his life dearly ; it was too late. The heavy blade of his opponent, swung with a force little inferior to his own, struck full on his head, cleaving through cap and skull to the eyes. Bal-

ancing for less than a second, Sebastian swayed backward and forward, and then toppled over the low planking into the sea ; while almost at the same moment something like a beam of light seemed to flash from under the *Bonito's* quarter through the blue sea, as the slave captain disappeared beneath its waves for ever.





CHAPTER VII.

W——, a coast town, within about ten miles of Cloughnagawn, was thrown into a little ferment one morning, on its being reported that Mr. Biddell and the Revenue Guard had been defeated the previous night in an attempt to capture some one or something up the Black Channel. Various rumours were afloat; some said the officer himself was killed, others that his leg was shot off. One man positively asserted that the limb had been left hanging merely by the skin, until “Owld Peg as lived in the lone house, and had the cure, stuck it together wid herrebs ;” but when at a later hour of the day Mr. Biddell was seen walking perfectly sound towards the Custom-house, astonishment knew no bounds, and Peg’s fame ascended beyond calculation.

“ You failed,” said Cummins to the coast-guard.

“ And always shall,” replied the other, “ until we know the place. Our look-out saw her as plain, he says, as I see you, but when we got in she was clean off as if the sea swallowed her. Then, thinking something might be had out of the women, we took a look at

Hefernan's before we went on to Kelly's, as I didn't want to be there too early ; but you might as well try to sound the Bay of Biscay with a two-foot rule as wheedle that girl. I think 'twas she, too, did the mischief afterwards, for I saw her whisper another she called Judy (one who has a tongue of her own, I promise you), and *she* slipped out. So when we got to Kelly's (I didn't want to be there before dark, you know), but when we got there, more than a hundred men were about amongst the rocks, and our brains were nearly knocked out with stones. On trying the door, it was fastened and some one sang out, 'Be off if ye are wise.' I told one of my party to fire in the air, thinking to frighten them, but they gave us two for it, and one had shot or gravel or something of the sort in, for I got infernally stung about the legs. The fellows were laughing away round us, whilst we couldn't see one of them. So we had to give it up."

"That accounts for the report about your leg," remarked the collector, with a smile, "but what put old Peg into their heads?"

"Oh, one of the people went in to light his pipe ; I suppose that set it going. But now they've fired on us, something must be done. If you offered a handsome reward, I think the Kellys would be the very ones to do it ; I know they're well frightened as it is."

"What would you offer the reward for?" demanded Cummins.

"For both—and a good sum too, as anyone who tells must leave the country ; we want to know who fired the shots, and above all where that hooker is kept."

"Would a hundred do?"

"I don't think it would," replied Biddell. "Say two, one for each; if we knew the first, and that Heffernan was amongst them, we might get the rest out of *him*."

"Oh," replied the collector, "if he was there at all 'twould be aiding and abetting; that's just the same, you know."

"Well, will you offer it?" asked the coastguard.

"I must first report this, and ask authority," was the answer.

Aileen Heffernan, by which name she always went, had now grown to womanhood, and fully entered into all the incidents of her foster-father's life. Though advanced in years, he was yet hale; but his wife had been for some time dead, and the girl kept house for him with a cleverness which prevented his missing any of the little comforts to which he had been accustomed. Nor in other respects did she prove an unworthy assistant, as she often contrived to obtain intelligence and warn him of dangers impending from the authorities; who, in fact, had not erred in supposing him the leader and right hand of the Black Channel smugglers.

Originally adopted as a source of gain, smuggling had in time become interwoven with Heffernan's existence, so that now in his old age he pursued it almost from feelings of love.

But, besides, the romance of the calling may not have been without irresistible attractions for one of his character, and there was something so peculiarly adventurous in his mode of proceeding, as might well

have deluded persons of a grade higher than that of a mere fisherman.

Possessing a hooker, as such craft are denominated, having all the sea-going qualities of her class, carrying but two sails, a main and a fore—the latter worked by long ropes or sheets leading aft, and the former traversing on a bent-iron bar across the stern over the rudder—with such a craft, which although of ten or twelve tons burden a single hand was able to manage, Heffernan would glide to sea of a dark night and return before morning loaded with quantities of contraband goods. Passing up the Black Channel in a way which baffled observation, he would there be met by his confreres, and in an incredibly short time the hooker would look innocent enough to defy the attentions of the most lynx-eyed officer of the Water Guard. She would then be brought to her usual moorings behind the big rock, and in the morning her owner might be seen pipe in mouth examining the heavens with most innocent scrutiny, whilst his last night's cargo was being disseminated through the country twenty miles off, or buried in holes or caves. On the other hand, if the approach of light or danger prevented the *run* being at once completed, there was an arrangement by which the mast was lowered, and soon after the *Peggy* became invisible to mortal ken ; Heffernan himself returning home whistling carelessly, and replying to all inquiries that he had lent her to carry a load of herrings or sea-wrack. These replies were usually accompanied by a quizzical leer, which must have been very tantalising to the inquirers. For it was necessary to detect her with the articles actually on

board in order to condemn her. No likelihood of this ever occurred except when a day intervened between her entrance and the discharging of her cargo; and during this time she was almost invisible, as, whilst discharging, so much rapidity was used, and the number of persons collected rendered resistance almost certain. It had therefore become for some time past a matter of importance to those in charge of the Revenue to ascertain Heffernan's hiding-place.

On sea their chance was small indeed of ever overhauling this shrewd old hand in his manageable boat, which besides sailed so close to the wind as in sailors' *parlance* to nearly "put its eye out." At all events catch him in the fact they could not, and every attempt hitherto made at search had failed. Lately, to their desire for the gang's dispersal, had been added the fact that a party sent against them had been maltreated and fired on; so that at length a notification was issued offering one hundred pounds reward to whoever gave information as to those who fired the shots, besides another hundred to the discoverer of the secret of the Black Channel. But all in vain; and whether from ignorance of the mode of concealment, or horror at the name of informer—so odious to Irish ears—certain it was that more than six months had elapsed, and no one seemed desirous of earning the money; whilst with the apparent failure of the Revenue authorities Heffernan's prestige had so increased, that if the Kellys were ever disposed to make disclosures, their tongues were now tied by fear. Breach of Revenue laws once brought home to Heffernan, and the *Peggy* condemned, it was well understood

that all other proofs would be quickly forthcoming ; but this was exactly what could not be accomplished, and until it was, all else seemed in vain.

The authorities were nearly in despair ; but one night Collector Cummins was informed by his servant, as he was preparing to go to his bed-room, that a person wished to see him on business.

“Business, business ? this is no hour for business. What sort is he, Tom ?”

“He looks like a sea officer, Sir.”

“A sea officer,” muttered the other, considering. “A sea officer ? Show him in,” he continued, pulling on his boots.

A tall, bronzed-looking man, with large whiskers, and only one arm, was introduced.

“Sit down, Sir,” said Cummins.

“I wish to inquire,” said the stranger, without availing himself of the offer,—“I wish to inquire if that is genuine ?” producing a copy of the placard offering two hundred pounds reward.

“Undoubtedly it is, Sir. I am prepared to pay the amount at any moment. Is it on that subject you come ?”

“Softly, softly,” replied the other. “Will you be good enough to see if we are quite alone, as far as the hall is concerned ? This may be a matter of life and death. Walls, you know,” he added, “might have ears.”

The collector opened the door. Tom *was* certainly there ; but he seemed out of ear-shot. However, to guard against chances, his master told him not to wait ; and on his departure turned the key, cutting off all communication.

"Now, Sir," he said, rejoining his guest, "you may speak freely. Earn it, and the two hundred pounds are yours."

"Yes, yes," replied the person addressed, whilst his lip slightly curled. "Yes, yes ; but I have a few questions to ask. Suppose it brought home to the people of this district, what punishment awaits them ?"

"Which do you mean ?" demanded the collector, laying his finger on the two separate offences stated.

"Well, about this boat, and the smuggling."

"Oh," replied the other, "that's easily told. Utter ruin to all concerned, in a pecuniary way—the fines are enormous."

"Ah," nodded the stranger coldly.

"And long incarceration, probably, besides," continued the revenue officer.

"Something better that," muttered bronze-face to himself; then aloud, "Will it include the entire district ?"

"Well, I think not," was the reply. "My opinion is, it would be difficult to include so many in it ; and even if they were, the Board would scarcely enforce it."

"You think that, do you ?" asked the man, with a blank look, and moving his feet as if about to rise.

"I do on that charge ; but if we had proof of the firing, 'twould be different," continued Cummins ; "and one might bring the other. I mean if we had the hooker safe, we'd soon find out the rest. *That* would be transportation ; and every man of them was in it. I've ascertained that fact, though as yet I'm not in a position to prove it ; but when *she's* caught, *I* know who'll tell enough."

"Then," demanded the stranger, "am I to understand *all* would be included in that?"

"Oh, you must except the persons giving the information. Of course, they'll be pardoned."

"A word more," said the one-armed man, anxiously, after some moments' thought. "You tell me you know *who* will make this disclosure, on the hiding-place being discovered."

"I do."

"Are you certain of it?"

"Perfectly. Fear only restrains them now. When the secret's known, the gang is broken up, and all fear goes with it."

"Say," he questioned, in a low deep tone—"say, is the name Moynahan?"

"No," replied the collector at once. "No, it is not. What you asked was both unfair and unusual. Fortunately, I could answer; but if you name any other, I now warn you, once for all, I shall be silent."

"I am sufficiently satisfied already," said the other, off whose mind a load seemed suddenly lifted. "Will the authorities," he continued, "prosecute *all* except the informer for the offence?"

"The transportable one?"

"Yes."

"I think, Sir," remarked Cummins, "you had better leave that to themselves."

"No," replied the man, in a decided way; "no. I want certainty, not chance. Can you ascertain whether they will pledge themselves to prosecute *all* of the district of Cloughnagawn against whom evidence can be ob-

tained, with the exception you named, provided this mystery of the Black Channel is revealed—mind, *all*, and with their utmost power?"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the astonished official, "you're a terrible enemy—Heaven forbid you were mine."

"Don't deserve enemies or expect them," was the stern reply. "Will you answer my question?"

"Of course I can ascertain it," said the customs officer.

"How soon?"

"Ten days."

"This is Tuesday," remarked the stranger, rising; "will Friday week do?"

The collector nodded.

"Then," continued the man with the one arm, "this hour Friday week you will see me again."





CHAPTER VIII.

HJOHN HEFFERNAN had made grand work of it: by two o'clock in the morning the *Peggy*, with a clear hold, was swinging at her usual moorings, and he was himself picking his way homewards through the darkness.

Aileen was, however, rather astonished at hearing him, as he approached, cautioning some one thus,—

“ Handsomely—mind yourself there, or you’ll be over the rocks. Brace your nose a little more nor’ed, messmate, or you’ll spile your figure-head.”

“ Ay, ay, skipper,” answered a strange voice. “ You’ve but rough anchorage here.”

“ Oh,” thought the girl, “ he’s in good humour; but who on earth has he with him?”

“ Now, then, here’s the door—rather low for one of your draught of wather,” said Heffernan, as he with his companion entered, and she beheld a tall, dark-looking man with large whiskers, dressed in a sailor’s jacket and trousers, a pea-coat hanging over his left shoulder, whilst in his right hand he held a small bundle. “ My daughter,” continued Heffernan, by way of introduction. “ Alley,

The Black Channel of Cloughnagawn.

Mr. Hughes is coming to ride out a little gale in this quiet nook—aint it so, shipmate ?”

“ Quite right,” replied the stranger ; “ and the hospitality is doubly acceptable where the hostess is so fair.”

“ Nonsense,” observed the old man, somewhat gruffly ; “ let her alone.”

There was no further remark then, as she with her assistant hastened to place food before the two hungry men ; but at supper, after seeming some time lost in thought, the guest remarked,—

“ It’s no use, I’ve been knocking my brains about thinking who she ”—pointing to the girl—“ is so like, but I can’t make it out.”

“ There’s strange thoughts of them sort comes betimes in one’s mind,” said John. “ Afther the owld woman (God resave her) was took, I used to see her face nights an’ nights in the red turf on the hob, but I got used to it, and never bothers my head about it now. You’ll lend us a hand Thursday, won’t you ?”

“ Of course; and you may well say a hand, for I’ve only one.”

The young woman had before observed that his left sleeve was empty.

“ Oh,” remarked Heffernan, “ some’s betther with one nor others with two.”

“ How did you lose it, Sir ?” asked Aileen.

He started, and looked so long and fixedly at her that it was his host who replied,—

“ The ship was attacked by pirates—— ?”

“ Ay, ay,” struck in the man, recalled to himself, “ as bad as pirates, and I lost my flipper.”

"You'd as well have an hour's *caulk* in bed now," advised his host, "then start early with me : we'll not be back till late. In that way, no one would know you were here, even if they thried."

"With all my heart," replied the stranger, rising. "Don't put yourself out for me ; I can sleep anywhere—I'm used to it."

"Oh," interrupted the old man, "we aint so bad off neither. Follow me," he continued, taking up the candle.

On his return, he found the young girl still where he had left her, resting her head on her hand.

"Father," she demanded eagerly, "who is he ?"

"All I know," said Heffernan, "is, Captain Symmonds, of the *Lugger*, axed me to keep him here a start, as he's in trouble. Why do you axe ?"

"When he speaks," she replied, "it seems as if I often heard his voice before."

"Eh !" cried Heffernan, with a chuckle—"Eh ! and he saw your face before ? Take care, Alley, or maybe it'll be a case of *Spontis Bustion*,* as Docthor Small called it the night he sacked Quirk over the dead man, an' gave him a black eye to the bargain. Don't fall in love, Alley."

"Nonsense, nonsense. Is his name Hughes ?"

"So he says ; but I aint his godfather or god——"

Further remarks were here interrupted by a terrific yell from Judy, who, wearied with the day's fatigue, had been for some time sitting on a stool fast asleep, and as she nodded backwards and forwards, managed to knock her

* Spontaneous combustion.

eye against the hob ; and then under the full conviction of being wide awake all the time, she sprang to her feet, armed with the pothooks, demanding,

“ Who done it ? ”

“ Done what ? ” she was asked.

“ Hot me in the eye,” shrieked Judy.

But discovering how the affair really was, she turned on John, requiring to be at once informed “ what he meant by keepin’ two dasint wimmin up, knockin’ their eyes out for his divarshin, with his owld cronawns of stories.”

At an early hour the fisherman and his guest left the house, not returning until after dark ; and as the intermediate days till Thursday were similarly passed, Aileen saw but little of her new acquaintance. That little, however, undoubtedly recalled to her mind some one she had before met. The more she thought of it, the more it puzzled her, as she sat musing on the night appointed for the next venture, after her father and his companion had left the house.

It happened either on account of the brightness of the night, or from some unknown cause, that they were prevented from landing in the usual way ; so Heffernan, on entering the Black Channel, and seeing how the case stood, addressed his guest as they approached the land : “ Now, messmate, you just take away home, eat your supper, and go to bed. I’ve a little consarn here I chooses to do by myself.”

Hughes laughed as he sprang out. “ Good-night, *Boo*,” he cried, and started off towards the smuggler’s house. This course, however, he did not pursue long : the moment a large boulder intervened between him and his

late companion, an alteration occurred in his proceedings, whilst the following thoughts passed through his mind :—

“ I have them now, the treacherous dogs. Betray a man, then starve his wife and child : they died amongst these rocks from cold and hunger, in deep winter. Darling Ellen, partner of my heart, sleeping with our little one in your wild grave, be cheered, for vengeance is at hand ! This host of mine, too ? well, he must take his chance, for only through him can I reach the others. Above all, these Moynahans. Ah ! old man, you shall not escape. My turn is come. You gave no mercy, you shall have none. One victim might have sufficed, but for Hogan’s tale. Little did he think to whom he spoke. He was stationed here at the time, and saw them as they lay torn by wild animals in the midst of the brutal inhabitants of this Cloughnagawn. I *will* have vengeance. Once I was other than I am now ; man has changed me to a tiger, and shall feel my fangs. This girl—what is there about her ? of whom does she so remind me ? how can she be *his* child ? But let it pass. Nothing, no, nothing shall balk me of my revenge. Oh, how I have longed for it ! Now it has come at last. And that wretched Cummins talking of his money. Faugh ! Ay, money, money, I have plenty of you now : but you are valueless, for ‘tis vengeance I seek. Yet ‘vengeance is mine,’ the Lord sayeth. But he spoke to human beings. These are none such. They are robbing wolves, who have deprived me of happiness in this world, perhaps in the next. Oh, for my former feelings, when, with those I loved, prayer came to my lips, as it will not now, or perhaps this might pass. And why will it not come ? Be-

cause I am thrown on a sea of temptation, deprived of charity as a guide ; and 'tis they have done it. H-a-a-a !"

During this monologue he had followed the course of the Black Channel, along which Heffernan was slowly guiding his boat, with lowered mast, almost hidden in the shadows of the high land. Having tied a piece of smooth soft sod over his knees with his neck and pocket handkerchiefs, the stranger was enabled to creep, snake-like, close to the edge of the Channel, keeping his prey in view, although the boat would sometimes disappear behind the rocks. This continued for more than an hour, when at last the hooker vanished, and was seen no more. Then the stranger laughed outright.

Seating himself, he now unbound the kerchiefs, and obliterating as far as possible all marks from his knees, he took up a stone and deliberately knocked it against his forehead until blood came ; he also scratched his hands. Then, hearing a splash in the water, he rose, marked the place where he had sat with his knife in such a way as to escape casual observation, and placing a rock between him and the Channel, ran home at full speed, muttering, " Clever fellow—carries his clothes on his head. I know the trick well."

When he arrived at the house, his face was covered with blood from a severe wound : he accounted for it by saying that he had fallen over a rock in the dark, and that he had also sprained his ankle and cut his hands. Aileen, quite frightened, busied herself in preparations for bathing the wounds, whilst Judy declared that " there wasn't the likes of a raw pratee in the world for them." But on the stranger's declining this prescription, she affirmed, with a

toss of her head, that “them furrin chaps never b’lieved in nothin’ at all, like Christhans should do.”

The accident, however, fully accounted for his reaching home so tardily.

“I’d have been here an hour ago,” he said, “but for it. Your father left me long since.”

Soon afterwards the old man appeared, and learning what had occurred, much commiserated his friend, fearing his accident might prove serious. But Hughes declared, with a laugh, that a night’s rest would put him all right. And in fact, although a little lame and bruised, he seemed, next day, not much the worse, being able to go about, and even to assist in discharging the *Peggy* when she reappeared at night as mysteriously as she had vanished. But a week or so afterwards he complained of illness, so Hefernan left for the fishing-ground without him.

Having remained in bed until noon, the invalid then rose, and saying that “he would take a walk,” went towards the mountain : he was still lame, and his progress very slow ; but on closing in the house a wonderful recovery seemed to take place, so that he could not only walk without difficulty, but even run. With little trouble he managed to find his resting-place of a few nights back, and then, after scanning around him with a pocket telescope, he undressed, hid his clothes, and took the water in a manner which showed that, although one-armed, he was perfectly at home in it. Disappearing among the rocks on the other side of the Channel, nothing more was seen of him for some time : but on his return he might be observed swimming very low, his head barely visible in the water. Having gained the shore, he dressed, and

muttering aloud, “They may well say truth is stranger than fiction,” took his way up the mountain: he then altered his course and came down on the house from the hills, appearing very lame indeed, but in raptures at the beauty of the country. Soon after, he went to the water’s edge and sat down to wait for the old fisherman, who was now returning. “Something about that girl,” he muttered, “reproaches me with what I’m doing: but as I *will* do it, why—it’s better to keep out of her way.”





CHAPTER IX.

CONTRARY to Hughes's expectations, his fall seemed to have considerably shaken him, so much so, that he would now frequently allow the boat to go out without him, while he remained in bed till a late hour : after which he would wander a little about the country. At length he declared his intention of accompanying his host upon one of his customary expeditions.

"Now I think you'd betther not," Heffernan had said, in a rough but kindly way ; "that foot of yours might get a squeeze. Besides, we aint going to do nothing that night. She'll be too far off to fetch in in time for half the job ; and then, you knows," he continued, with a wink "the little's to do I does myself. No : you jist let Alley nurse you to-morrow ; afther that, if you're able, I'll not say agin it."

"He gives little chance for nursing," remarked the girl.
"Lame as he is, he's never in the house."

"Yes, yes," replied Hughes, hastily, "my foot's better when I dip it in the sea."

"Ay, ay," struck in the old fisherman, "no cure for a sailor, Alley, like the say."

September the fourth was the time fixed ; and Heffer-

nan had resolved, for better security, not to return from *the fishing ground* that day, but quietly, at nightfall, edge towards the point of rendezvous. On the present occasion, this point was considerably farther to sea than usual, as the authorities, recently become more vigilant, had caused boats to be kept along shore whilst the cruiser remained at a distance. Far to sea, beyond them all, was therefore selected as the safest place of meeting, Heffernan having no fear as to the result of his enterprise so long as the Revenue boats had not violated the Black Channel. In the latter case it had been arranged that a small light should be shown from the cottage window—a thing, under other circumstances, always strictly prohibited, except when the *landing* was being effected ; and then a gleam came from the smuggler's window as a signal to his friends.

So on the morning in question, the *Peggy*, with her owner, proceeded to sea, while his treacherous guest remained in bed. The latter, however, soon proceeded on his usual excursion, which this time really took him along the mountain path, and to a large rock at some height which served as a landmark for coasting vessels. There he drew a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his face in an ostentatious way, and then wrote with a pencil on a piece of paper as follows :—

“ To-morrow night (5th) closely guard both entrances. Keep strict watch on Heffernan's. If about eleven you see the least light there, join me at once well armed—they'll fight. If you don't see a light, wait till two ; after that, surround the house. Until you act, remain at a distance.”

Having deposited this under a flag-stone, on a corner of which he had marked a small cross, he descended towards the shore, musing meanwhile on the strange manner in which his host's daughter seemed to haunt him, and wandering hither and thither in that peculiarly restless way which is the result of self-dissatisfaction, until, as darkness fell, he reached the smuggler's house.

Whatever dispositions the enemy might have made for the capture of the *Peggy*, it was soon ascertained that the sending of boats into the Channel formed no part of it: not an oar broke the stillness of its waters. The night was pitchy dark: and the inmates of the cottage, fearing to have either fire or candle-light, lest an accidental gleam might send a false signal to the approaching Heffernan, sat in a state of silent excitement for some time, the stranger leaning against the wall in a half sulky mood.

"It is miserable this," said Aileen to him. "Can you not tell us some tale to cheer us a little?"

"I fear if I did," he replied, "'twouldn't raise you much. *My* tales are all sad."

"*Divil* a matther," remarked Judy. "Shure bad or good's betther nor starin' at one another, barrin' we can't see a stim. Tell us of that grand say fellow—Davy Jones—you named once to the owld chap."

"Paul Jones you mean, I suppose?"

"Well, Paul or Davy, it's all the same; aint they birds out of one nest?"

"I've read of *him*," observed the young girl.

"Bedad an' it's more nor I ever done," put in Judy. "An' good rason why: sorrow a won of them for letthers

I could ever know from another. Musha who was *he* as-thore? Was it him you was sayin' that fought agin his own people?"

"The same."

"Then more shame for him!" she cried. "I hates the sight of a turncoat as I do pison."

"And it is said, for revenge," added Aileen. "What a horrid motive."

"I say *no* to that!" exclaimed Hughes, starting up and striding about. "I say *no* to that! Wrongs may make life unbearable. Would you have one more than human? No; a heart may be so changed by injury that, the angel driven out, a devil takes his place. Do you wonder *he* should prompt to revenge?—do you?" he demanded of the two half-frightened girls.

"There's no lie in that anyhow," assented Judy, recovering herself. "Purshuin' to the one word, if it's the last you ever spoke. The devil's the boy would do it nately, sorrow a doubt, but maybe it's lave you he would, as he done my bowld Paddy Egan when he showed him the world and all of ginnies, an' towld him help himself, for a likin' he had for him, an' Paddy stuffed the pockets. You may b'lieve it, but where was he in the mornin'? Alanna machree, only in the middle of a furze-brake, spread out illigant like a calf on a car, bawlin' milliam-murdher like mad, all the grand gowld turned to yellow blossoms, and not so much skin on his whole body as would cover me nail—I heerd it from a boy that seen him. That's the way *he* thrates *his* frinds for you."

"Oh!" said Aileen, "why not expel the demon, and bring back the angel of peace?"

"Because," answered Hughes, sadly, "the grave has closed on her for ever."

"That I mightn't," cried Judy, "if it aint yourself you're afther manin'."

"Never mind who I mean," he replied. "But would to Heaven he had an angel always near him!"

"Why, bad cess to you," screamed Judy, "is it makin' love to the child afore me face you are?"

Hughes was about to give an angry reply, when Heffernan's voice was heard outside telling them "to open the door." This being done, he entered in excellent spirits, and having eaten his supper, retired, saying to his guest,

"I've business at W—— to-morrow, and mayn't see you till evening; you'll stand to us, won't you?"

"All right," responded Hughes.

"Musha bad fortune to me, Miss Alley," said Judy, as they were undressing. "Bad fortune to me but it's thinkin' I am there's somethin' queer with the fellow in the room above. He's a way as if it's mighty heavy his heart was intirely; an' the eyes of him always stuck into you. Faikins! meself thinks there's love or murdher in it."

"Nonsense, Judy," retorted the girl. "He'll hear every word you're saying; love indeed!"

"Ay, love, Miss Alley. You don't know half the mischief's in them owld boys. Begorra I don't care if he heerd iviry word; let him take his pickin' of it."



CHAPTER X.

EARLY in the morning John Heffernan took his way towards the town of W——, where he had matters of business to arrange. The walk was a long one for a person of his age, and he only arrived there by ten o'clock. Fortifying himself with something at a friend's house, he proceeded about business, which occupied him till two, when he resolved to drop in at the carman's resting-place, called "The Jolly Fiddler," for some more creature comforts, before returning home. As he walked down the street for this purpose, he observed that the sign over the "O'Mack Arms" (as the head inn was named) had been newly gilded. Struck by the gorgeous and fierce appearance of the lions, he stopped (up the entrance of a narrow lane) to look at them, just as two persons, a man and woman, issued from the door beneath. Unaccustomed as he was to the full blaze of feminine costume on a grand scale, John at once set down the female as either being her Majesty the Queen, over on some little private matters of her own, or at the least, the wife of the noble earl then presiding in Dublin Castle. On her head was a chip bonnet almost hidden beneath a

profusion of various-coloured artificial flowers, which formed, as it were, a glowing place of repose for a full plume of the bird of paradise. Indeed the whole structure bore a strong resemblance to the phoenix in flames as represented on the policies of some of our insurance companies. Over her shoulders hung a shawl of marvellous pattern : a yellow centre throwing out rays of bright scarlet and blue, and so artistically adjusted, as to rest between the hips and give a peculiarly heraldic appearance to the background of the picture. What could be seen of her gown was of a charming grass green : being made very short, it displayed to advantage a pair of really serviceable legs, cased (apparently not with their own full approbation) in nankeen-coloured boots with neat fur tops. A white veil hung from her bonnet—and as the lady walked with rather long strides, streamed behind her in a way that gave a certain airiness to her *tout ensemble*. This was considerably increased by her holding by its centre a worked pocket-handkerchief in one hand, with its corners dangling free. In her other hand—with which she leaned on the gentleman's arm—there were a pair of white kid gloves, which evidently would (under penalty of stitch-breaking) have refused admittance to more than the very tips of her fingers ; but no one could deny that the gloves were *there*, which was perhaps the chief thing desired. With open mouth the fisherman was revelling in admiration of this display, when, glancing at her companion, he exclaimed—"I'd a'most swear that's Small, only where could he know the likes of her?"

As they went up the street, however, his curiosity led

him to follow them. At the corner they turned and again approached him. All doubt now vanished. There was the medical attendant of "Garrylaggin, including Cloughnagawn," apparently on the most intimate terms with a lady of such grandeur, that the fisherman was afraid to look at her.

"I'll go away aisy," he muttered, retreating ; but as he turned for this purpose, the doctor shouted after him—"Not a foot, not a foot!" adding as he shook hands with him—"Just in time for a bit of dinner—aint he, ducky?"—addressing the lady.

What reply she made Heffernan never knew, for a heat like fire began to circulate through his veins : there was a singing in his ears ; and he would have given a world, had he possessed it just then, to be a thousand miles away. Whilst he continued in this pitiable state, they reached the "O'Mack Arms," which the lady entered, leaving the doctor and fisherman in the street.

"You might say joy and good luck to a fellow," observed Small, with a smirk.

"Shure so I do," replied Heffernan—"but—" first looking cautiously round him—"though it's sorry an' loth to lose you I'll be, too. Musha who tould her of you at all now?"

"Told who?" asked Small.

"The great lady who is going to take you from us," said John, speaking generally as to rank, for fear of offence.

"Great lady, indeed," replied the doctor, perceiving and humouring the joke. "That's the Lord Lieutenant's wife."

“ Begorra I thought as much !” cried the fisherman.
“ Murther an’ ages now, was it afther you she cum ?”

“ Can’t you ask her at dinner ? maybe she’d tell you.”

“ Me !” shouted the old man. “ Is it me ? I darn’t spake to her, nor I darn’t go next or nigh her, nor I won’t neither. She’s too grand.”

“ I don’t think her a bit grander than Shusy, only for the fine clothes,” remarked Small ; “ and I’d make as free with one as the other.”

“ Oh, phuff !” said Heffernan. “ There’s no use talkin’ that way. Shusy’s a dasint girl enough ; but you aint goin’ to even her to the likes of her.”

“ Shusy Simpson’s gone from me,” observed the medical man, “ and I’ve a notion of taking her,” pointing upwards, “ for a start to Garrylaggin, the air’s so good.”

“ Is it the Lord Liftenant’s wife ?” exclaimed John.
“ Well, dang your impudence.”

“ Haw, haw, haw !” roared the doctor.

“ He’s gone clane mad wid the luck,” thought the fisherman. Just then he heard over his head another “ Haw, haw, haw !” and looking up, there was the good-humoured face of Shusy herself, divested of the gorgeous bonnet, and with a grin on her mouth reaching from ear to ear. At dinner there was nothing but jokes and laughter at the awe with which the old man had regarded her as long as he believed her to be the Lord Lieutenant’s wife.

“ It’s the queen I first took you for,” he said, “ and I wondhered what your business was.”

“ Haw, haw, haw, haw !” roared the happy couple, until tears sprang into their eyes. Then the lady declared

that they had promised to take tea with Mrs. Quinlan in the neighbouring street ; but Small staying with his guest, she went alone, being told to say (if asked) that the doctor was professionally engaged.

“ I’m getting old,” said Small, after her departure, when they had sat a good time speaking on various topics ; “ and I was somehow lonely without anyone to care for me. Shusy was always a good girl—a little hot at times ; but I know her ways, and she’s used to mine, and so we got married a couple of days back. Maybe it’s what I wouldn’t have done once, but things are changed—things are changed.”

“ Here’s her health, and yours, anyhow,” said John, suiting his action to his words. “ Do you remember the night you fell from the chair, docthor, an’ all about the bones ? ” he continued with a laugh.

“ To be sure I do,” responded Small, with a hearty roar. “ We’ll have one glass more to little Aileen ; that night reminds me of her. She’s not little Aileen now, though ; but who’s this tearing up stairs ? ”

At that moment the door flew open, and in rushed Mrs. Small, all her good humour vanished, and the flush on her countenance showing that she was in a great rage.

“ The most impudentest set ! ” she exclaimed.

“ Who ? ” asked her husband.

“ Mrs. Quinlan, an’ that crooked article of a daughter of hers ! It’s nothin’ but dirty spite ‘cause I’ve got the husband she wanted. An’ Tom, too, Cummins’s man—set him up—that I remimbers without shoes or stockin’s, an’ glad to get a bit of cowld stirabout he often was—in

his grand livery. Set a beggar, enagh! — An' the 'O'Macks' coachman, with hair on his head like a horse's tail, an' purshuin' to the thing in it but horses an' dogs. Dogs indeed—dogs would be too good for him."

Having delivered herself in this way with the utmost volubility, and without stops, she flung her portly person into a chair and began blowing the hot air from her mouth, whilst agitating her handkerchief fanwise.

Small remained perfectly silent for two or three minutes; then stealing a side look at his wife, he saw a little pucker at the corner of her mouth: so filling a glass from a bottle of the *best Cape* which was on the table, he handed it to her, saying—

"Never mind them, Shusy. Drink that and tell us all about it." Shusy followed his advice, and the pucker deepening into a smile, commenced her recital with the same disregard to punctuation as before, accompanying it with a sort of running commentary.

"She was there, an' the crooked disciple iv a daughter. (Be the same token, 'twas nothin' but common four-pennys they had on, an' if there was one hole in the cap of her, there was ten. That's the owld won, that sat fornint the tay-boord. She thought she'd get *him* for *her*")—pointing to her husband, "but she didn't). An' Tom, Cummins's man, was in it, with his best pay-green shute, an' dawshy red bindin' (I wondher if Cummins paid for it?—he was always a bad warrant for the like), and the O'Macks' coachman (though how they keeps a tack on him I don't know, an' they an' all belonging to 'em in the Cumbry Coorts they say), an' mighty civil they war first. 'That's an illigant bonnet, Mam,' ses

the owld one. ‘Yis, Mam,’ ses I; ‘it’s gin’rally thought so.’ ‘Taint from our establishment,’ ses the daughter (spitefully makin’ little of it). ‘Maybe ’taint the worse for that!’ ses I (givin’ as good as I got). ‘It’s a darlint little goose is in it anyhow,’ ses Tom, Cummins’s man. ‘Goose!’ ses I; an’ the rage got into me very nose. ‘Goose yerself; an’ it comin’ all the way from where Adam an’ Eve lived afore they done wrong!’ At this they all laughed like mad. ‘We hoped the docthor would have come with you,’ ses the mother. ‘He’s professedly ingaged wid a gentleman,’ ses I (very grand, to show ‘em I knew the differ). ‘Bleedin’ him, Mam,’ ses Tom Cummins’s man. ‘Bleedin’ him?’ ses I. ‘Yes, Mam,’ ses he, ‘an’ hard work they must have with them mile-stones too.’ ‘Mile-stones?’ ses I. ‘What’s the docthor to do wid them things? Not but,’ ses I (for I knew it was gotherin’* he was with me about mile-stones)—‘Not but you know’d the use of ‘em well when you used to sit on the big won near the cross, atin’ the bit you got.’ ‘Is your tay to your likin’?’ ses the owld one, ‘for you aint dhrinkin’ it?’ ‘Maybe they aint used to it up there,’ ses Tom (to spite me for remimbering him of the times when he wasn’t quite so grand). An’ I seen them all smirk up at the word, so ses I, ‘We *are* used to it, and the best of tay too, not toplash like that.’ ‘Thru for you be all accounts, Mam,’ ses Mrs. Quinlan, with the passion in her face. ‘An’ we all know the canister it comes from, too,’ ses Tom Cummins’s man. ‘Do you?’ ses I. ‘Much good may it do you.’ ‘An’ we’ll soon know more,’ ses he; ‘we’ve a little dog on the scent,’ ses he; ‘we’ll soon

* Making fun.

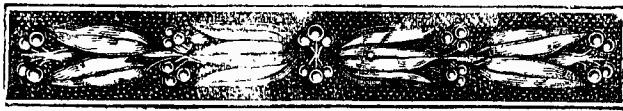
knock a hole in it.' On this up starts the O'Macks' coachman, and runs all round the room with his nose down, cryin' Yo, yo, yo!—you'd swear it was a raal dog was in it. 'Just so,' ses Tom, puttin' his tongue out. And they all set up a great shout. 'If that's your manners,' ses I, 'they aint mine.' An' out of the house I wint, widout as much as by your lave. When I was in the street, where was me beautiful gloves, an' I afther payin' three shillin's for 'em, but left behind? So back I goes, an' I heerd Tom tellin' the rest of some fellow wid won arm an' two hundred pounds, an' ses he, 'I'd have sint word by her but the way she got on. What did she come here for at all,' ses he, 'wid such airs?'— 'For me gloves,' ses I, 'an' nothin' else: I'd schkorn it.' Then the O'Macks' man lifts 'em up be the fingers, as if 'twas a rat he had be the tail, an' ses he, 'Faith, Mam, you'll have to put your hands in trainin' 'fore you enter for them stakes.' 'Stakes or chops,' ses I, making a snatch at me gloves, 'they're mine, and I'll have 'em.' And so I have too," she exclaimed, exhibiting the kids.

We have been compelled to punctuate this rhapsody in order to make it intelligible to our readers; but it must be understood that it was spoken without the slightest pause from beginning to end.

Dr. Small went into roars of laughter, kicking his little legs about in all directions at the recital, and seemed particularly to enjoy so much of it as related to the milestone. Shusy too became affected with the contagion; but something seemed to cross their old guest's mind, which made him suddenly rise and declare that he must go at once. Wishing every happiness to the newly-

married pair, he left the inn ; but instead of proceeding homewards, he passed up the street to a house where meal was sold. Then a ragged urchin might be seen emerging from the same place and cautiously approaching the collector's house, about which he lingered until Tom, the servant, appeared at a window. The boy then left after rubbing his chin in a knowing way. Soon afterwards the servant himself left the Customs officer's house, and walking away round the corner, crossed the street. Coming back again on the other side, until he gained the door of the meal-shop, he took a sudden side-step in, and disappeared.

In about half an hour the fisherman was nearing W——, on his way homewards. There was a dark look on his face, and a determination in the manner in which he stuck his stick on the ground, which plainly showed that something had excited him. “The villain,” he muttered, as he lengthened his strides, “I'll be in time to make *him* pay for it, anyhow. The threacherous villain !”



CHAPTER XI.

JUDY'S opinion respecting Hughes, and which, as we have seen in a previous chapter, she had so boldly expressed, certainly seemed to be borne out by his conduct during the day. This, contrary to his usual way, he had spent about the cottage. At one time moving rapidly to the door he would open it, and looking towards wherever Aileen happened to be, close it again: he would then walk up and down the apartment, throw himself into a chair, and stare straight at the girl for several minutes, until the blood rushed into her face. All this excited Judy's fierce displeasure, and she was restrained from an open expression of her disgust only by fear of her young mistress. Nevertheless she managed to let off her superfluous indignation by continuous murmurings of "Bad scran to his imperance!"

Towards evening his mysterious conduct reached such a pitch that, as she afterwards declared, "she'd have choked down dead if she didn't say somethin'," and that something came with a great laugh: "Well, if you

don't know us agin 'twon't be for want of starin' at us anyhow."

This remark seemed to annoy him, for he started up and left the house.

About half an hour or so elapsed when Judy, declaring that she should get in a supply of water before dark, went out and left her young mistress alone, endeavouring to finish some needlework by the waning light. Gradually, however, Aileen's fingers ceased their task, and her hands dropping on her lap, she fell into a deep reverie. And thus she sat whilst the hour brought vividly before her mind her mother's last night on earth. Again she seemed to hear distinctly the voice of *her* who had long lain in the cold grave; and thinking of this, and of what might be her father's fate, if indeed he were alive—probably a wanderer, ignorant of his child's very existence—as she thought of all this, sitting in that lonely autumnal twilight, the large tears of soft womanhood trickled down her cheeks. Suddenly the mellow tone of a bell broke the stillness, as swelling on the breeze it came borne from the mountain chapel.

Gliding from her chair the young girl fell on her knees and with clasped hands and streaming eyes lifted heavenward, she prayed—

"Sweet Saviour! in thy goodness be merciful to my poor mother's soul; and oh God, preserve my father—my beloved father — William Whitmarsh. Guard and pro—"

Thus far she had proceeded when the cottage door was flung violently open, and Hughes, rushing in like a maniac, had clasped her in his arms, whilst the words

“ My child—my child—my Ellen ! ” burst from his lips. But Aileen heard him not—she had fainted.

“ My Heavens, my Heavens, have I killed her ? Lost again when just found ! ” exclaimed the distracted man.

In a moment his large coat was off, and spread over the mud floor ; he laid the insensible form upon it, and kneeling by her side he chafed the cold hands, kissing her pale lips, and using the most endearing terms. So intent was he as to be quite unconscious of Judy’s return, the first notice of which came in the shape of a tremendous onslaught from Judy’s pitcher, which sent him reeling to the ground.

“ Oh you owld rascal,” she cried, “ I’ve caught you ! If the pitcher warn’t bruck, it’s knock your brains out with it I would, this blessed minnit ; an’ Miss Alley kilt dead an’ not a splinther of it left together ! Ah—ah—h-o-w-l-d aisy, will you ? Devil a go I’ll let you go till himself comes—then you’ll get it, I’m thinkin’. If you makes me put my two hands on your throath, that I mightn’t but I’ll squeeze your black tongue out.”

During this colloquy Hughes had struggled hard to free himself, but his assailant kept him broad on his back ; at length finding him apparently resigned to his fate, she relaxed her grasp a little, “ to see,” as she said, “ if there war any life at all in her.”

Here the fallen man put forth all his strength, forcing her from her hold, and sending her discomfited in turn to the other side of the room ; then regaining his feet, he devoted himself to the assistance of the fainting girl, who had already begun to show symptoms of recovery.

But her stout protectress, although sadly put out by her own unexpected repulse, was as yet far from being defeated. Arming herself with a thick stick used for washing potatoes, she had again advanced to the rescue, and already the stick was descending, with orders to "lave the place, you villain, an' take that wid you!"—when Hughes, holding up his hand, said, "For God's sake, my girl, be quiet. I'm her father."

"How dare you call me *girl*?" she cried, "or speake to me at all? it's the father of lies you is."

At that instant Aileen murmured her name.

"Stand out of my way," continued Judy, "if you are a man at all.—I'm here, Miss Alley, I'm here asthore!" she said, throwing herself by the young girl's side. "I'm here, acushla, don't be afeered, I'll tear the head of him afore he'll meddle with you again."

"But I'm not afraid," whispered Aileen faintly—"I'm not afraid, only what is it? I thought my own dear father came as I prayed for him, and embraced me, calling me his child, his Ellen, and then something came over me—can it have been a dream?"

"No, my darling, no," he answered, "it's not a dream."

"Howld your devil's tongue, will you?" shouted Judy, threatening him with her fist. "Aint there mischief enough done for one night?"

"Lift me up," said Aileen—"lift me up."

In this Hughes was permitted to take part, although under strong muttered protest from his adversary. But having once commenced, he seemed to usurp the more prominent part, arranging her chair so gently, and

smiling on her so fondly, that the servant's wrath was half disarmed.

"Are you too weak to hear me?" he asked.

"No," she replied. "If 'tis true, joy will give me strength for more than that."

"Aileen, or Ellen—so we always called you—what does your own heart say?"

"It told me," she answered, "from the first moment I heard your voice, that in childhood I had often heard it before."

"As your countenance," he said, "seemed to haunt my memory, ever entwining itself round my heart. Fool that I was, I wondered why. Now I have discovered it, Ellen Whitmarsh, behold your mother, and in her, your second self." And opening his waistcoat, he placed in her hand a small miniature.

"Glory be to God," cried Judy, peeping over her shoulder, "if it ben't Miss Alley herself is in it! Well, that beats all."

"Yes, my child," he continued; "your darling mother."

"Now in heaven," she sighed.

"Ah, I feared it! I feared it! But God is merciful," he went on, "far far above my deserts. I am not quite alone. Throw your mind back. Do you remember living on the sea-shore; and a night of terrible confusion? Of your father's being forced away? Of his seeking a last embrace?"

"I seem to recall it all," replied Aileen; "and that some one ran a sword through his arm, my mother faint at the blood."

"Behold the mark!" he exclaimed, rolling up the

sleeve of his mutilated arm. "At least this much has been left me."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried the girl, pointing to some tattooing on the shoulder. "I recollect your doing that; all our names together. But that was in a town, for my father went to a shop for things."

"You are right; you are right. It was before we had to fly from C——. But it is all over now. Come to my arms, my loved, my angel Ellen."

"It's that way it is, is it?" said a rough voice; and black as thunder, John Heffernan stood before them. "It's that way, is it? and mayhap betther so; a man wants a fillip like to do this sort of thing right. Go to your room, Aileen; you aint zactly the sort of angel he's like to want to-night."

"No, no, no!" she shrieked. "No; there's horror in your face; and you know not who he is."

"Well," replied the smuggler, with a fierce smile; "I begins to think I do. You won't leave him—you will hold to him? then be it so. You axe if I knows who he is. A thraitor sold us to Cummins; he took money to bethray us. An' there he sits; let him deny it if he can. He crept like a snake into my buzzum, to tear my heart out. If you'd have come openly," he continued, addressing his guest, "it's respect you I would though I mightn't give into it neither. As it is, I despises you; but so I do cur dogs though when they're dangerous we twist their necks. You knows what you desarves. If you've a taste of a man about you at all, send that unforthunate girl from you."

"Oh, no, no!" she cried, frantically throwing herself

on the stranger's breast. "No, no—nothing shall part us now."

"Then it's worse nor I even thought it was," muttered Heffernan. "Never mind—I'll get help." And he moved towards the door.

"Only hear me," she madly screamed, throwing herself on her knees before him. "Only hear me; you who saved me and my poor mother from death, amidst these rocks, in the deep cold snow; you who for years and years have been to me indeed a father; listen to me—to us."

"'Taint no use," he said. "You only makes me worse, remembering me of them things. He ventured his life an' lost it."

But Hughes's manner now threw the party into the utmost astonishment. Instead of seeming struck by the danger of his position, he pulled out his watch, exclaiming—

"It is yet time." Then turning to Aileen he added, "Say it again; did he save your mother from death in the snow?"

"Yes, yes," she replied; "and more—oh! so much more than that."

"'Tis a night of wonders," remarked the person we may now call Whitmarsh. "Heffernan," he continued, "every charge you have stated against me is even less than the truth. Goaded by revenge, I sought the utter destruction of all in this district. For that purpose I became your guest. An angel has crossed my path, scattering my evil intentions to the winds. She is here, and in her behold my child, my lost Ellen; for I am

William Whitmarsh, the husband of her you saved from death amongst the rocks. A false tale told by a person formerly belonging to the Coastguard at this station, convinced me that those I loved better than life had perished through the inhumanity of the inhabitants of Cloughnagawn. I myself at one period suffered deep wrong from a man named Moynahan. This double injury closed my heart to every human feeling, and devoted me to revenge. God grant I am in time to counteract it. My life is in your power. You know my [deliberate intentions, and may hereafter act as you please. But now accept as atonement your own safety. Before we say more, extinguish every light. Ask no questions now, but put this place in darkness, or you are lost. Do as I say, and there is time, more than sufficient time to baffle your enemies. I am rich, through a deceased relative; ample means are at my command. Money can do most things you will admit, when despite your precautions I am here—*then* I used it for vengeance; but though seeking a demon, the good God has sent me an angel."

"But—but," broke in Heffernan, "you bothers me intirely with it all. Here I finds a man getting nothing but good thratement from me, only a treacherous spy in the end. An' a girl I've loved an' used as my own daughter, taking up a cock an' bull story to be the ruin of me."

"Say and think as you will," replied Hughes, "only protect yourself. Put out, as I tell you, every light; "I'll answer for the rest. Oh," he continued, "save me from myself; save me from being the destroyer of one

who succoured my beloved wife, and has restored to me this angel child!"

With such sincerity was this spoken, that his listener seemed almost convinced by it. "There can be no harm in that anyhow," he muttered, approaching the candle.

"Close the shutters, too," Whitmarsh eagerly entreated. "If in ten minutes' time the smallest light is seen from this house, you are lost, and I am your destroyer."

"Arrah," cried Judy, starting up and addressing the fisherman, "rouse yourself! Aint it God's truth he's afther telling you; an' a picthur of Miss Alley in his buzzum, an' her name wrote illigant on the arm of him."

During this speech she was engaged in covering up the fire with ashes, until not a vestige of it could be seen. Then, after a little staggering and falling over sundry stools, she reached a drawer, and taking from it an old ironing-blanket, and two forks, she soon prevented the window from telling tales under any circumstances. She then groped her way to the chimney corner, and reseated herself, with the observation, "Faith, then, it's betther be shure nor sorry any day."



CHAPTER XII.

N total darkness Whitmarsh's story was now fully related : how he had been betrayed by Moynahan—how, having fallen in with Hogan on board the *Brisk*, he had learned that the bodies of a woman and child had been found frightfully mangled amongst the rocks. That, believing them to be those of his wife and daughter, he had drawn from the man a full account, and registered a vow of revenge. Then he described his conflict with the slave captain, in which he had lost his arm ; and a shudder ran through Aileen's frame at his peril in that encounter. Modestly he narrated how, for his gallantry, he had received pension and discharge ; and how, his name being honourably mentioned in the newspapers, a distant relative, who had never before noticed him, had, when dying, bequeathed him his property. How, never swerving from his fixed purpose, this desire for vengeance had grown upon him, even from the very contemplation of it, until it absorbed his whole being, and drove him to devote his life to its gratification ; and that he had only been saved by the prayer he heard fall from his daughter's lips. "And now," he said to Heffernan, "it is the work of Heaven ;

quit with me this place. As I before stated, I have abundant means. My child's protector must be ever to me a brother. Let us pass the remainder of our days together, far away from here, in peace and happiness. Before dawn we can easily cross the mountains, and all clue will be lost to the whereabouts of John Heffernan of Cloughnagawn."

"What, leave my friends to their fate! never," cried John.

"Some of them," said Whitmarsh, "scarcely deserve your loyal care. I know the authorities are already aware that you acted as leader when the officers were fired on. One or more of your accomplices have proved false."

"False!" hissed the other, through his clenched teeth.
"False!"

"Ay," responded the narrator. "I have cause for what I say, believe me. However, I am not one, even so, to counsel your leaving them at the law's mercy. No doubt you can disperse them — do so. To-morrow your departure will be known. They'll take care of themselves, and if they do come forward against you then, it will be too late."

"I'll take your advice there, anyhow," said John. "No doubt they've a large armed force agin us; an' somehow I aint for fight, my heart's too weak entirely."

"Now God in his mercy be thanked for that," ejaculated Aileen.

This was said as Heffernan, groping to the door, imitated three times the scream of a curlew, so naturally, that the persons inside at first really thought that it

was some solitary bird disturbed at its nocturnal feed. “Now,” he observed, rejoining them, “in five minutes there won’t be a man within hundhreds of yards of us: they’ll know by *that* danger’s out. Whatever comes of it, I’ll face alone.”

“You’ve nothing to face,” replied Whitmarsh, “but a long walk, and the sooner it begins the better. We can slip out quietly one by one, and meet on the mountain path. Don’t take an article except what you wear. The first town will amply supply us.”

But Heffernan again spoke, and there was a faltering hoarseness in his voice as he did so, which showed how deeply the rough man was affected.

“William Whitmarsh,” he said, “you have this night found a child; for me, I have *lost* one. You have before you wealth and happiness; you know the road to them, take it—an’ leave the owld smuggler of Cloughnagawn to his fate. This house have stood to me in days of joy and of sorrow, maybe a deal of the last; but it’s the face of a frind is on it, an’ I’d be loath to part from the place, only that it’s lone an’ desolate it’ll be now, when she, the light, is gone that kept it for years an’ years the home to me it can never be again. So ‘tain’t that would stop me; but you’re a sailor yourself, an’ knows the love men like us bear the craft we’ve roved the wild waves in. Without wife or child, what have I but her on earth to care for? My heart’s in her,—William, I cannot leave her.”

“Why, this is madness!” exclaimed Whitmarsh; “utter madness. Saving yourself is easy, saving the other impossible.”

“Leave me,” continued Heffernan; “alone I’ll tempt

the passage out, an' once clear of this Channel, the owld man may find a place to lay down his head an' die, when his hour comes. Leave me!"

"Folly, folly, sheer folly!" cried Whitmarsh. "Fifty armed men block the entrances; you but ensure your own destruction and my misery."

"And my death," sobbed Aileen, as, casting herself where from his voice she knew the old man sat, she embraced his knees, and then rising, threw herself on his neck, kissing him again and again. "My second father," she broke forth, whilst her warm tears flowed over his white head and weatherbeaten face. "My second father, and is it thus you know the child you have loved and cherished for years, to think she would leave you in the hour of danger and misery. Now hear me, Heaven: where this my protector goes I go, where he stays I stay. Second father, did you ever know me break my word?"

"Never!" he replied.

"Nor shall you now."

"Then God help us," said Whitmarsh. "Old man, ruin not us all by your obstinacy; it must now be after twelve—by two it will be too late."

"Musha," struck in Judy, who had been an attentive listener—"Musha, botheration to you, is it a pig you are, that will neither lade nor dhrive, an' all for an owld boat as is no earthly good, barrin' the few crathers of fishes—I aint goin' agin them—an' more betoken the rowlin' I got in that same owld boat, an' the way I thought the inside of me was turned out. O-u-g-h! faith, I'll never forget it."

"Howld your tongue!" suddenly exclaimed Heffernan,

in a tone quite free from that despondency with which he had before spoken. “Howld your tongue, girl, and thry be of use. Stan’ up on a chair, and reach down every flitch of bacon from the rafthers—you can feel them easy enough. Then go to the room below, where the praties is, an’ fill all the bags: they’re lying on the heap. Even if the praties are new,” he muttered as if to himself, “they’re brave an’ hardy. Do you mind?” he continued aloud. “An’ don’t be long about it neither, for there’s plenty to do, an’ by all accounts not much time afore us. Whitmarsh,” he went on, addressing his companion, “your child’s love makes life still worth a struggle to the obstinate owld Black Channel pig, as she,” meaning Judy, “called me, that won’t leave his boat. There *is* a way out, though I fairly tells you one of danger; but danger to be met by bowld men with sturdy hands. If ye will take the chance we may escape together, an’ with the *Peggy* too. Only for Aileen’s words I’d never have turned to it. Alone and without heart I’d have failed—now I feels I can do it. What do ye say?”

“That we risk our lives freely with you,” was the reply.

“Then get ready to see wondhers,” he said. “You knows I had a hiding-place, never found out.”

“Don’t think so,” observed Whitmarsh. “I discovered it long since.”

“Well, revinge beats all,” remarked the fisherman; “but it’s no matther now. That cave can be enthered only up to half tide; when the full is in it, its mouth aint much over four feet high.”

"I guessed so myself when I saw it," answered his companion. "But even if it were possible for us to live in such a place for Heaven knows how long, depend on it armed parties will thoroughly search the district, knowing you can't be far off. Your plan, my friend, would prove a failure, and only catch us in a trap."

"Finding out my secret makes you bowld," said John ; "but depind on it you've much more to larn. We must carry the things down to the rocks opposite, an' wait there if we're too early ; but I'm thinking it's just in time we'll be. 'Twon't be half tide till afther two, an' it can't be more nor one now. We'll not thrust ourselves in them-away caves an' places, nor on the say neither, without food. There's bacon an' praties enough for us two an' Aileen for months. Sorrow a betther we'd want. There's a compass aboard too."

"And I've a capital chart ; it's small, but good," put in Whitmarsh, with some gaiety. "Why, old chap, if we were out of this, we could sail the world over."

"An' if we done it," replied Heffernan, "we'd have a craft fit to carry us. I'd think as little of crossing the Atlantic in her as of walking to that door. I've gone through more says in her, bone dhry, nor would sink many a big brag of a fellow that could hist her over his starn. No," he added, "I wouldn't mind it the valliation of that," snapping his fingers, "though we needn't go quite so far this thrip. But it's only right to have plenty of eating anyhow."

"What will you do for water ?" demanded Whitmarsh ; "of all things most needful."

"Oh ! that's one of the wondhers," answered the old

man. “There’s a spring in the cave from the rocks above would wather a navy.”

“See there’s no light from that fire, then,” said Whitmarsh, hunting out one of the flitches, “when I open the door; as long as there’s no light, we’re safe to two o’clock.”

But a loud sob sounded through the apartment as Judy thus made her protest: “An’ Judy Mulcahy’s nobody, I supposes? Not a word of her puttin’ a tooth in the bacon, nor the praties, nor nothin’; an’ she after fillin’ the bags with her own blessed hands this night! Umf, umf, umf! Enough for yez two an’ Miss Alley! Sorrow a word of Judy only stay here an’ be the *lavin’s of the ravenous polis*.^{*} Miss Alley, am I to be left for the *ravenous polis*? Umf, umf, umf!”

“No, my dear girl,” replied Aileen, “you shall share our lot, be it what it may.”

“I didn’t think,” remarked Heffernan, with a chuckle, ‘she’d like to thrust herself in the owld boat, to be turned inside out again maybe.’

“You ill-mannered thief you!” cried Judy, “that would throw a poor girl away as aisy as the dirty wisp you rubbed your brogues with! I’ll follow Miss Alley to the world’s end.”

* The police formerly and until lately employed in guarding and enforcing the revenue were always called by the people “ravenous polis,” their real designation being revenue police.



CHAPTER XIII.

SILENTLY but swiftly provisions and necessaries were carried to the water's edge — a labour in which the girls assisted, Judy's tongue being completely tied by fear of the *ravenous polis*. All around was so intensely dark and still, that Whitmarsh with difficulty realised to himself the presence of a large force in the neighbourhood, though well knowing such to be the fact.

When the preparations were completed, Heffernan locked the door of the cottage, and with a half sigh, threw the key far away. He then rejoined the fugitives, telling them "to sit down a start amongst the rocks." Here he left them ; but soon their keen ears detected him cleaving his way across the Channel. In less time than they could have imagined possible, a large dark object approached, which Whitmarsh announced to be the *Peggy*, as indeed it was. The necessities for the voyage being now placed on board, the women were lifted over the side, and the vessel slowly left the shore, in as noiseless a manner as if she were endued with life and conscious of her own danger.

After a little while Heffernan whispered under his breath, "Lie down all of ye in the boat. Ye had betther, for there's pints of stones here would be hard knocking for your heads."

As Aileen obeyed, her gaze fastened on a solitary star, shining sad and lone through the murky sky. All at once an inky blackness intervened : there was an indescribable feel in the atmosphere, with a reverberation around as of plashing waters ; and then she became aware that they had entered a cave.

"We're safe now," announced their guide. "Sthrike a light—God knows we've been in the dark long enough."

In a moment a candle flung its brightness abroad ; but before the party could look round them a most unearthly noise assailed their ears. It was a hoarse screaming cry, and seemed to burst from every quarter, as if all the demons of the lower world had been let loose.

Affrighted and shrieking, the girls covered their faces with their hands and sank down in mortal terror. Even Whitmarsh's stout heart beat quicker ; but Heffernan's laugh soon reassured them. "If we'd nothing but it to trouble us," he said, "we might go easy. Look !" and taking the torch, he flung a ray towards a flat rock near them, on which stood a poor frightened cormorant, with gleaming yellow eyes, giving rapid utterance to sounds which, echoed and re-echoed through the cave, had caused their dismay.

The means used to dispel their fears at the same time served to show a portion of the wonders around them ; and amazement taking the place of fright, they were now

nearly as much paralysed by this new feeling as they had been before by the other.

High above them, far as they could see, stretched an arch of solid stone ; glittering and glistening here and there as the candle-light fell on groups of stalactites and spar ranged in the most singular manner. Down the sides a drapery of the same material depended from the roof, in folds and curves of so beautiful and graceful a sweep as would have defied the most skilful upholsterer to excel. From the lower tier of rocks had sprung up a forest of stalagmites, in obelisks and pyramids white as driven snow and gleaming with a perfect brilliancy. Here was figured an arm-chair, most perfect in form, and apparently studded with gems of marvellous brightness. There a gigantic bottle, worthy to grace a Titan's banquet board, flashed back ray upon ray from its polished though unequal surface. On one side appeared the exact bust of a judge in wig and band, the deception so true that involuntarily one held their peace from feelings of respect, until the spell was broken by the ripple and splash of the dark waters beneath. Or the eye might fall on a noble cross, surrounded by resemblances to organpipes, and, under the momentary impression of standing in a temple dedicated to the Most High, the knee would bend and the head bow, until something recalling the gazer, he found, though indeed a temple, yet that it was one erected by Nature in her glorious workshop, to that Almighty Providence whose will she is permitted to carry out.

“ How grand ! ” “ How beautiful ! ” “ Musha it bates all ! ” fell from the lips of the party, as each expressed, in

their peculiar terms, the feelings uppermost in their hearts.

"It is," said Heffernan. "Often as I seen it, I never gets over the wondher. Hear to this"—and striking with a pole several portions of the hanging curtain, the most beautiful sounds swelled through the vault, dying away in the distance. "An' it's nigh half a mile like that," he added.

"Why, it must open into the sea, then?" cried Whitmarsh.

"It does; but whisper: For a hundhred yards an' more it slants, an' the passage is so low that nothin' but what Aileen said to-night would make me face it. What's to be done in it must be within the first ten minutes between the ebb and rising tide, when the wather's slack. If we aint out by then, Lord have marcy on us, for every living sowl will be crushed to death agin the rocks by the flood. "Tain't too late for ye to go back yet."

"No," replied Whitmarsh, aloud. "God has guided us thus far together—we'll trust to his protection."

"I feel, my old friend," said Aileen—"I feel now that the life we have hitherto led was not in accordance with Heaven's wishes. Obedience to law *is* right, God has said so. We refused compliance and angered the great Lawgiver. My second father, promise your child to give it up."

"It don't take much to tempt me," he answered, "afther the escape of blood I had this night: for surely we'd have killed *him*. Afther that, I'm done with it for ever. Take me where you like, Alley, only let me save ye in the boat, an' I'll never rise my word agin you; but

the owld boat they'll never have—never," he passionately added, "if I die for it!"

"She's our only chance now," observed his companion; "but we must get rid of the cargo to lighten her, if for nothing else."

"In coarse we must," assented her owner. "We'll put the tubs on the rocks—'twon't do to throw them over, they'd float out and show where we war—only what we want for wather. We'll stick the rest about, an' the sooner we're at it the betther, for though we'll have to stop here all day, we must keep quiet. They'll be roving about, and a body couldn't well say where they'd be. I wondher why they're so persecuting this time?"

"Because they've evidence against you now," said Whitmarsh. "The Kellys sold you."

"Oh," groaned Heffernan, "the Kellys of all men! Why, I done it, an' I don't deny I done it, to save them."

"Just so; you can never trust your accomplices. I'm right glad you've given it up."

"Come on," called John, in an excited manner, "come on an' let us work, or God forgive me, it's cursin' the Kellys I'll be."

To the women was assigned the little covered forepart of the boat, where they had a few hours' sleep, whilst the men worked hard stowing away the lading here and there, or starting the spirits from a number of casks, and filling others with water from the spring before alluded to and placing them on board. So by the time a faint light had crept into the cavern (through a large hole, surrounded by bushes and long grass, opening from above,

as well as from the entrance) they were in a position to have lived in their present situation for a couple of months. But they were well aware that every portion of the locality would be so thoroughly searched that remaining there was utterly impossible. As the brightness increased, the old man observed to his companion, "That will do—sit and rest a taste now—we can have a bit of bread and a mouthful of wather anyhow."

"But what's the use of all this other food?" asked Whitmarsh. "We can't eat it raw."

"Maybe many as good a one has done that same," answered the old man; "but I aint going to axe ye to do it: there's wood to fill the boat, only we must wait till the first burst is over."

They had remained perfectly quiet in this way for a time, and the morning was advanced some hours, when there came a loud halloo, and then, after a time, voices were heard above them.

"Here's a hole," said one, "goes to God knows where. Water!" he continued, as a large stone came down with a plunge; "and deep too, I know from the sound. He's sure to be caught, Ned, tho' where can he be? an' him's gone too as was to fetch us on it all."

"As for that," replied another voice, "be sure they found *him* out—he's safe enough by this, believe it, my boy."

"In some place like this maybe," went on the first speaker, hurling another piece of rock through the aperture. "What's to stop them all from hiding there?"

"How could he get the boat in?" remarked his comrade.

"That's it," said the other; "but 'twon't do this time. Wherever he is, out he can't go—both passages are safe."

Heffernan hearing this nudged his companion: "Can't he?" he whispered with a grin.

"But I say, Jack," observed Number 2 speaker above, "if you thought as how you could see down there, I'll hold your legs if you lie flat."

"Thank you for nothing," answered Jack. "Thry it yourself, Ned. I've so much *smearum* * on my hands from the sarving mallet, I'd hold on like a crab's claw—ha, ha!"

"Curse the use bothering about it now," responded Ned. "Even if he war there, he'd have to come out some time."

"Ay! ay! And we've to cross at twelve to meet them beasts of Kellys. Tho' I'd catch the old chap, I hate a fellow as sells another. Come on."

"But suppose he *was* to get out, what would Biddell say?" demurred the other.

"Out! Why, he can't get out, I tell you—both passages are blocked."

"Where's the crusier?" asked the first speaker.

"In the offing," replied Ned, his voice dying away as the men walked on.

"Hi, hi, hi, hi!" quietly laughed the fisherman in a subdued way; "they doesn't know who's a-listening—it's well to larn anyhow. After twelve we'll go up the cave. God keep me from cursing them Kellys. May we never

* What sailors used to overlay ropes in order to strengthen them. In the operation tar is plentifully used.

meet!—Amin, sweet angels—for bedad 'twouldn't be safe."

"It's past twelve," said Whitmarsh, later in the day, examining his watch.

"Then here goes!" replied John. "We'll get as nigh the narrow part as we can, an' the first ten minutes afther about half-past twelve to-night will tell the rest. Easy now," he continued, when they had proceeded some distance—"Easy now, an' let her come in. *There's* wood in plenty, an' time to cut it up too. We haven't much farther to go."

The place was here so dark that a candle had to be lighted: and then quantities of planks and pieces of spars were seen lying on a rock near.

"It's an owld wrack I towed in once," said Heffernan, "an' never wanted. Lucky for us now."

A very little labour supplied them as well with fuel as they were in other respects; and the caboose or fireplace having been set going, the party had a good meal, which helped to cheer them more than might have been expected.





CHAPTER XIV.

UNTIL past ten o'clock that night, they remained precisely as we left them in our last chapter. Then by their guide's direction, the boat was again put in motion, and an hour's time brought them to what seemed a final stoppage. Although the vault was yet lofty, further advance appeared to be barred by a solid mass of stone; whilst a close, stifling sensation proved the scarcity of air. On Whitmarsh remarking this, Heffernan replied—"Ay, it's bad enough just now because the tide's high on it; every minute will mend that. You watch nigh the black part there, and you'll see how it is."

The time steadily slipped away as the place which Heffernan had pointed out gradually began to assume an arched appearance. A little longer, and it became the upper portion of a narrow passage through the rock, which, as the tide fell, seemed to grow wider and higher, until at length a stream of fresh air pouring in, proved to the grateful recipients that communication with the sea outside was complete.

"We've an hour yet," said John, taking his companion

apart, "an' you should know how things is. When the tide's fully out, that passage will be just big enough for us to go through—not a taste more. The boat will a'most touch both sides, an' won't be over two feet clear in the highest part above us. We'll have something better nor ten minutes to do it in, an' we must push her along with our hands agin the roof. There aint room to use nothing else; an' no matther what happens, there must be neither stop nor stay: for if she takes the rocks we're lost. You're a man, an' I tells you the thruth; once afore I went through it, an' never thought to do it again. I'm a'most sorry now I towld ye."

"We're in the hands of God," was the reply.

"If we gets out," he continued, "we'll be in the bottom of a deep bay, with two long arms of land running out nigh ten miles; one west, the other about sou' sou' west. The wind I knows is two pints or thereaway to the southward of west, for I seen the bushes and scud moving over the hole in the cave; an' I can hear the sough of the say going agin the north side. It's round that we must get; if we thried the other, for sartin the cruiser would be afther us. We'll be hard set to get round too, but as she"—slapping the hooker—"can go within two pints of the wind in smooth wather, we'll thry. If the worst comes, we must make a short tack, though I think she'll do without it. Once round the head we'd be safe, for I knows them parts well. An' now there's no use in tarryfying the crathers of girls out of their sinses; advise them to sleep."

Aileen and Judy were rather astonished at the solemn manner of both men. As the latter was passing under

the little deck, Heffernan, holding out his hand, said—“Shake hands ! If you’ve the bark of a dog betimes, you sticks to your friends like one.”

Judy’s reply was—“Twas the likes of him would even a Christhan to a dog.”

As minute after minute passed, the two watchers could almost hear the beating of each other’s hearts. “I wish to Heaven the time was come,” said Whitmarsh. “Anything would be better than this.”

“It’ll come time enough—maybe too soon,” replied his companion, as he took a candle and leant over the side, holding it (shaded by his hand from the blast rushing through) close to the wall of the vaulted passage, on a level with the water. After a moment’s survey he rose and looked his companion full in the face, impressively demanding—“Are you detarmined ? ‘tain’t yet too late—in a minute ’twill be. If you have the dawniest bit of fear, don’t be ashamed to say so. It’s what no man need be ashamed of, to dhread facing death in such a way. Tell me if yer detarmined.”

“Fully,” replied his comrade.

“Then take your place,” said Heffernan.



CHAPTER XV.

WHITMARSH rose at the smuggler's bidding, and lighted another candle.

"Put it in the far end," said Heffernan, "on the floor, where nothin' can hit it. If it aint low, the blast will put it out, when there'll be no time for anything. There ! that's it. Now stand as far for'ed as you can, an' let nothin' on this arth stop you even. If you sees me atself jammed in the rocks, leave it so, an' push for ever agin the stones over your head. Keep her bow straight to the stream that'll be running in, or she'll twist. Are you ready ?" he asked. "Now then !" and sending the boat with a powerful shove up the arched passage, he cried : "Mind, it's for dear life."

In a moment Whitmarsh's hand was] on the jagged roofing, working the vessel forward with all his might. He was soon dripping with blood, torn by the sharp rocks projecting from above ; but still he pushed on might and main. Perspiration began to flow from him like rain and the place to feel as hot as an oven : he could scarcely breathe. By the feeble candle-light they seemed as if passing to the infernal regions, through a

valley of gloom and horror. Once, a blow on the head fairly knocked Whitmarsh down : the boat grated against the sides of the cavern as she missed his guiding hand, and he heard Heffernan's loud exclamation of dismay. But in a moment he was up again—though staggering from dizziness—and pushing, pushing ! Already it seemed a long time ; the water was evidently on the rise, and the roof rapidly lowering. All he could hear was the c-h-i-s-h ! c-h-i-s-h ! of his companion, as he sent the hooker forward, with all the strength of his arms. Suddenly a grayish light broke out before him, and as he heard the well-known sound of the surf, now plainer and more distinct, his heart bounded within him, for he knew this was outside the passage. But at that very moment the bow took a rock, and the hooker became immovable. Whitmarsh strove with all the energy of a madman, but in vain !

"Let her an inch or two back," shouted Heffernan.

Reversing the action of his hand, he obeyed.

"Now an inch to starboard, an' on, if you're a man !" cried the smuggler.

With great exertion this was done ; and as the forepart swung clear, a starry sky in its full glory met his longing gaze. For one instant he relaxed his labour ; and that instant nearly proved fatal. The ark of their safety was caught abaft against the stony roof, and Heffernan (perhaps having in anxiety neglected his own safety) pressed down by the massive covering. Fortunately his neck had fallen into a groove made for fishing purposes, which by the merest chance saved his life. But not a second was to be lost. Rushing down, Whitmarsh seized the tiller, and pulling it clear of the rudder, threw all his force into

a sudden dash with it against the wash-board, raised nine or ten inches above the tafferel, and on which the man's throat rested. Again and again the heavy beam was struck until nails and clinches were driven from their hold, and the separated portion fell into the water, releasing his half-strangled companion. To pull him down from his dangerous elevation was the work of a moment; and then one vigorous shove against the face of the fast-closing vault, sent the *Peggy*, with her living freight, free and safe under the canopy of Heaven.

Whitmarsh almost fainted as he beheld their unexpected deliverance, and was only recalled to himself by his companion saying, "I owes you my life; wake the girls, an' let us thank God."

At midnight, on that wild sea-shore, their grateful acknowledgments were raised to the Father of mercies, who had preserved them from a danger the full amount of which was only known to the two men. And when he saw the mouth of the passage they had so lately traversed disappear beneath the swelling tide, a feeling of horror thrilled to the heart of Aileen's father, as he thought of what had so nearly been their fate.

"Now," said Heffernan, as after having lighted the fire, they had cooked and eaten a good meal, "there's a deal to do afore morning; we'll get sail on her."

This was done, and in a short time the hooker was breasting the wayes with a swiftness and buoyancy which proved that her owner had not lightly boasted of her capabilities.

"Aint she a beauty?" he demanded after a little time, during which he had been holding his hand full against

the wind, edgeways down his face. "Aint she a real beauty, an' it not a pint to the south'ard of west-sou-west? I know'd it warn't. She hasn't a pint this minute beyant two-an'-a-half, if she has that."

"She really behaves grand," replied Whitmarsh. "I hope the moon won't show."

"Why, it must be most two now," said the old man. "She'd have been out afore this only for them heaps of black clouds beyant, an' I'm thinking they won't stand long either."

In less than an hour this proved true, and the queen of night unveiling her charms, illuminated the scene. Scarcely had she done so when the boom of a gun fell on their ears.

"It's the cruiser," cried Heffernan, turning towards the sound. "And there she goes. She's to windward, but far astarn of us. Ay, here she comes now—aint they mighty sharp?"

Another gun broke the stillness, and Whitmarsh perceived a large cutter in full chase.

"She can't hold a wind with this one," observed Hef-fernan, fondly patting his boat; "but I'm timersome of her going faster through the wather with such a press of sail. We'll stand on anyway; it's our chance—he won't like the ugly customers thereaway"—pointing to rocks inshore.

"But," remarked his comrade, "if he makes faster way through the water, he can afford a short tack: tho' he's lying pretty well as it is, and if he beats us round the head, he'll have nothing to do but wait and snap us up—we can't run back, for the place is all alive by this."

"Oh," answered the steersman, "I'll insinse you into it. The flood-tide's running hard in yet, an' that's why we aint making more way. It's nigh dead against us ; with him it's worse, for he has it broad on his weather bow, and it's forcing him to leeward ; like a man mowing, he won't fetch within miles of where he looks. Close in, there's an eddy with us : he'll be afraid of the rocks to go so nigh, an' when we get there we'll slip faster through the wather. If he don't hurt us with his guns, I aint in dhread, an' they're only small ones."

On stood the stout smuggler, never for a moment relinquishing his grasp of the tiller, but devoting every energy to the little vessel as she flew along the land, her sails so nicely balanced that a quarter-of-an-inch would have shaken them. As he had predicted, their pace was much accelerated as they approached the shore ; and when a heavy breeze obliged the cutter to take in her gafftopsail, he expressed his opinion that he could beat her as he liked.

"You see," he went on, "it's all well till it gets dirty : then if they keep up their flybenights of sails, the sticks won't stand, and they're so sharp forward, we'd almost dhrown him if it got bad."

Gun after gun was fired by their pursuer, seemingly with such little purpose that both men began to fear lest it might be done from some other motive than the apparent one of forcing them to heave-to.

"I don't like all that noise," said Heffernan. "Try and look sharp with that glass of yours."

Nothing suspicious was in sight — "Unless there's something behind the head ?" remarked Whitmarsh,

who had been surveying all round. "But what can he mean by it?" he continued; "he must know we're out of reach."

"There! he's about now," cried Heffernan. "I told you he'd be afraid to stand on. That's an end of him anyhow."

Whilst he spoke, as the cutter flew round, a puff of smoke curled upwards from her deck, and before any report reached their ears, a ball was seen leaping towards them from wave to wave, but it fell short two hundred yards; then came the report, as the old man was observing—

"That's only poor spite, if he meant it for us at all. But," he added, thoughtfully, "I misdoubts something round there. 'Twas said a small sloop of war was about: may be it's coaxing her up he is."

"And if you find her beyond the head, what will you do then?" asked Whitmarsh.

"Stand right on—keep the wide say afore us. We'd be far to windward of her, an' with the chance we'll have, no two of them would ever catch us. No, nor shan't neither."

"If there's a sloop of war in it," observed his companion, "I'd better take the bearings, and set a course. He might follow us for days."

"Then he'll do it to America," cried Heffernan, with flushed face and excited tone. "Ay! every inch. My blood's up now, an' before they'll get a stick of her I'll go to the world's end. We've lots of everything, an' as good a crather under us as ever swam the say."

On they dashed: the headland was just abeam as the

cutter, again swinging her head to the northward, pursued on the same tack. But she was fully three miles astern, and although now with sufficient offing to clear the land, it soon became evident that the chase was, in such weather, more than her match for speed.

Having opened the land behind, without any enemy being visible, they had eased away, and were running several points free, when a sudden exclamation from the helmsman drew his companion's attention.

“Aft with the sheets—aft with them!” he shouted, as setting the example, he had already drawn the mainsail like a board, whilst the *Peggy* flew up to within two points of the wind.

“Look at her!”

There, in the bottom of a bight a couple of miles to leeward, was a small vessel heading out under just sufficient sail to give her motion; but the instant this manoeuvre of the fisherman was perceived, a gun from her bow sent its warning note abroad, as fold after fold of snowy canvas descended over the tall masts.

“He lay like a spider,” said the smuggler, “a-thinking I’d run slap into his mouth, an’ I nigh done it, too. He’ll be hours now beating up, an’ we’ll be far off by then. What you talked of doing, messmate, you’d betther do, for afore we make the land agin we may have to go many an’ many a mile. There’s only the open say for us now; any other way we’d be catched, an’ that’s what John Heffernan will never be—never!”

So, as Whitmarsh with chart and compass prepared by skill and forethought for every emergency, the Irish hooker rushed like a sea-bird into the wild ocean before her, keep-

ing a close hauled course westward, pursued by the sloop of war and cutter. Farther and farther she sped towards the setting sun, until the land of her origin faded on the horizon ; and as the dark waters closed over the whitening furrows made by her keel, they seemed as if anxious to obliterate for ever all trace of the adventurous smuggler of Cloughnagawn.





CHAPTER XVI.

XEARS had fled, when one evening in the autumn of 18—, two travellers were sauntering along the shore of the Ottawa, not far from its junction with the noble St. Lawrence. They had lately arrived from the mother country, and having ascended the stream to Montreal, were indulging in the curiosity natural to persons of an inquiring turn. On the present occasion, tempted by the beauty of the weather, they had strolled from their hotel some distance up the tributary stream, and at length reached a spot where the water spread to a considerable extent, and formed with other accessories a very picturesque landscape.

“What fine scenery there is in this country,” said James Seagrave to his friend Patrick O’Neil. “I much doubt if we could equal it in our own.”

“Perhaps one reason for your doubt,” replied O’Neil, “is that we rarely value what is always at hand. Now this very spot reminds me much of my own country. There’s a great deal of the same wildness about it. This may be more extensive, but I should hesitate to admit its superiority in beauty. Is it not wonderful,” he

continued, "how the mind deludes itself when once a hidden chord is struck? Now I could this moment fancy myself in Ireland, and could feel disposed to swear to that"—pointing out a small vessel approaching—"to that being a western hooker."

"I see nothing wonderful about it," remarked Seagrave. "A boat on water is no strange sight."

"A boat?" cried O'Neil, who had been gazing attentively. "I said a western hooker. By Jove, it is one, too!" he exclaimed; "and an inch farther I don't go until I find out all about her."

The travellers then proceeded towards the landing-place, the one of them smiling incredulously, and the other declaring that he was right in his conjecture, and that it was a most extraordinary occurrence.

When the boating-party had disembarked, our friends saw that the passengers consisted of three persons: one a very old, gray-headed man, with that peculiar look which is always seen in those who have spent their lives in witnessing the wonders of the sea. The second, also advanced in years, appeared from his bronzed face and empty sleeve to have been not unfamiliar with scenes of strife.

The third was about thirty years of age, and his bright eye and smooth brow pointed him out as one with whom the world had as yet dealt lightly. The two last named seemed of a higher grade than the old man—who nevertheless appeared on terms of perfect equality with them.

When the boat was secured, the two strangers who had been looking on approached, adverting to the beauty of

the scenery and the strange appearance of the boat as their apology for the intrusion.

“My friend has gone half crazed about Ireland since he has seen her,” said Seagrave.

“I never met anything in my life so like a western hooker,” asserted O’Neil. “I could almost fancy myself on the Shannon again.”

“You may say that—you may say that,” broke out a voice behind him.

“But isn’t she one?” persisted O’Neil—“isn’t she?”

“There is a time-honoured adage, gentlemen,” observed the one-armed man—“that it’s ill talking between a full man and a fasting.’ Whatever you may be, my friends and I are in the latter predicament. Will you join us at supper, or, as you from the old country—for I perceive you are—might perhaps call it dinner? I live close here. This is my son-in-law, Mr. Mulhall, a member of our colonial legislature; and this is a very worthy and esteemed old comrade.”

So hospitable an invitation was necessarily as cordially accepted as it was given; and the whole party having proceeded a short distance, found themselves, on turning an angle of a plantation, in front of a good substantial house, from the door of which a young boy of about six years was just issuing, pursued by a stout middle-aged woman, vociferating,—“Then bad cess to me if it won’t be breakin’ the neck in your body you’ll be over them scrapers, an’ Miss Alley ’ill go mad intirely!”

Seeing the strangers, however, she caught up the de-faulter and beat a hasty retreat, making strenuous efforts to untwist the youngster’s hands from her hair.

The master of the house led the way to the drawing-room, the arrangement of which proclaimed the presence of some more refined specimen of the fair sex than the woman they had already seen ; and this was soon made evident by the entrance of the lady herself.

"Mrs. Mulhall," said the host. Then smiling, he added, "I forgot I was ignorant of your names, gentlemen."

"Mine is Seagrave."

"And mine, O'Neil."

After this introduction the party sat down, with the exception of the old man, who had remained outside.

O'Neil observed that the lady—who was about eight-and-twenty, and very fair—had a peculiarly resigned expression of face. "She looks like one," he thought, "who has passed through vicissitudes unusual to her sex."

Meantime his friend was deep in argument with his new acquaintances.

"I fear, Sir," he said to his host—"I fear you in this colony are likely to fall into some of our old errors."

"In how far?" asked the person addressed.

"Your restrictive duties. Seeing their folly we are every day relaxing them, but you here seem to be tightening the rein."

"Don't include me, I beg of you. I've long seen that mistake."

"Nor indeed me, either," added Mr. Mulhall. "I've always spoken and voted against them, though very strong arguments can be used in their favour, too."

"What I object to," interposed O'Neil, "is the temptation they offer to evasion, attended—as such attempts

are—by so much danger, misery, and demoralisation. There are heart-rending stories in my own country on this subject. One I shall never forget: an entire family driven out on the Atlantic without food or water."

"Poor creatures!" said the lady, with a pitying look—"Poor creatures!—and lost?"

"Lost? of course they were: they must have died of starvation. A miracle couldn't have saved them. If you only heard it as I have—really it is too horrible to think of what they must have suffered. And one of them was a beautiful young girl. It is said the father was obstinate to a degree, and *would* prefer death to capture. When last seen he was standing right out to sea. But of course the notion of his crossing the Atlantic in an open boat—even supposing he was otherwise prepared, which he wasn't—is preposterous. Though indeed they *do* say, that if anyone could have done it in such a vessel, he could have done it in his. But he was never heard more of. Oh, I assure you the fate of poor John Heffernan and his party has long formed one of the *wirristhrn** stories of that coast."

On concluding these remarks, the speaker, to his astonishment, heard some one behind him bursting into a—"Hi, hi, hi!" and turning round he saw the old gray-headed man, laughing in great glee.

"You may say it—you may say it!" exulted the old man. "An' he done it too. Now I axes ye," he continued, addressing the lady and her father—"I axes ye, did the crather ship as much as a pint of wather the whole way?"

* Lamentable.

"No, indeed," they replied, almost with one voice.

"Why bless my soul," said O'Neil, looking at him—"Bless my soul! perhaps *you* are—"

"You may say it! I'm owld John Heffernan hisself—anyways what's left of him."

"I *was* right after all, then!" affirmed O'Neil, clapping his hands. "She *is* a western hooker—I knew she was."

"Twar the *Peggy* you seen to-night," replied her delighted owner. "Ay! an' as good as ever."

"Have you ever heard, gentlemen," asked the host, "of the penknife a person once boasted of possessing for forty years in working order, but which, on inquiry, turned out to have had ten new blades and three new handles during the time? My friend Heffernan keeps the *Peggy* on the same principle."

"But, for Heaven's sake," asked O'Neil, "tell me how you got out of the Black Channel? I know all the story. But how *did* you get out?"

"That's a secret," replied Heffernan. "If you wants to discover it, ye must look for it yourselves. If ye spend half the money at home, that ye do in gosthering and meandherin' in furrin parts, ye'll soon larn how John Heffernan got his boat out of the Black Channel?"

"Musha, then, bad luck to that same owld boat," said Judy Mulcahy, coming into the room suddenly,—"Bad luck to her! The rowlin' I got an' the way I — O-u-g-h, faith, I'll never forget it. But it's afther forgettin' I'll be to tell you, Miss Alley, that supper's ready."

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